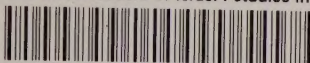


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The moral leaders of Israel : studies in



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The Moral Leaders of Israel

STUDIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF HEBREW RELIGION AND ETHICS.

By

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Volume I.

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DEDICATION

To those who have been my companions in the quest of biblical knowledge, my students and friends, whether in the intimate associations of the classroom, or in the wider relationships of audiences and assemblies, these chapters are dedicated with appreciation of inspiration received and in the hope that further service may be rendered.

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INTRODUCTORY.

THE Old Testament contains the total surviving literature of the Hebrew people during the classic period, when the Hebrew language was a living tongue. But the portions of the Old Testament which have given it the significance it has for religious life are those which were produced through the activities of the prophets.

Other parts of the Hebrew scriptures, such as the laws of the nation, the wisdom writings, the hymns of the temple, and the great apocalypses, are not without great beauty and value. Moreover, they are for the most part informed by a deeply religious spirit. In fact religion in one form or another pervaded public and private life to a marked degree. The community was a church as well as state.

The temple at Jerusalem, and in earlier ages the local sanctuaries, exerted a profound influence upon the nation. Next to the kings and nobles, the priests possessed more authority than any other class. Much of the daily life of the people was ordered in accordance with beliefs and practices which were essentially religious in origin and significance.

Yet the prophets were the creators of Israel's nobler moral and spiritual ideals. Often at odds with the priests as they were, and still more frequently called upon to denounce both rulers and people, they kept alive those sanctions of righteousness which gave Israel a unique place in ancient religious history, and prepared the world for truer conceptions of God and duty in later days.

It is natural, therefore, to speak of the prophets as

the religious teachers of the nation, and through the nation, of the world. For the Hebrew people have proved themselves the religious teachers of the race. Yet in this series of studies it has seemed best to speak of the prophets as the Moral Leaders of Israel. This choice of title has been deliberate and for the following, among many, reasons:

I. The prophets were the first great teachers to make clear the intimate and essential connection between religion and the moral life. It is a singular fact that the religions of many nations, and even the Hebrew and Christian religions in certain periods, have been conceived as consisting essentially of certain forms of worship rather than of inspirations to honest and godly living. The prophets made this connection so clear that it could not be ignored.

II. The prophets were keenly sensitive to the need of a social conscience in the nation. They were the friends of the poor, the advocates of the oppressed, the tribunes of the common people, the rebukers of iniquity and injustice wherever they encountered it. In their days the nation had a far larger portion of political freedom than in the times of Jesus. It is not strange, therefore, that the prophets dealt more freely and directly with the social sins of their age than did the apostles, who lived under the fixed and arrogant authority of Rome. This fact makes the utterances of the prophets of immense value in an age like our own, when the character of the social order is subjected to such close inspection and the arousal of the civic conscience is of such concern.

III. The lives of the prophets, as well as their words, afford some of the most valuable material in our possession for the teaching of the moral life. They were, in varying degrees, the living embodiment of their messages. The life of an Amos or a Jeremiah affords not only the substance of ethical and religious instruction, but as well its fine illustration in character and conduct.

These are some of the reasons why the study of the lives and preaching of the prophets has awakened so much interest in our times. So similar are the social conditions, in spite of centuries intervening, that the protests of these ancient preachers against the sins of their time read like pages of contemporary history. The sermons of Micah and Isaiah might have been uttered yesterday, and as one reads them over they seem hardly dry from the press.

The series of studies contained in this volume and a second which is to follow it, covers the entire period of prophetic activity from the days of Moses to the close of the Old Testament ministry of the prophets. The points of emphasis are the times in which the prophets lived, their relation to the people and the government, the chief events of their lives, the essential features of their messages, and the results of their work. The growth of the Messianic hope is traced in each period. In some instances the work of others than the prophets, who are yet worthy to be included in the list of moral leaders of the nation, is given a place, as in the case of the priestly reformers, and of leaders like Nehemiah and Ezra.

As the work of the prophets continued throughout the Old Testament age, and was the most vital feature of the history, the studies present not only the picture of prophetic activity, but the essentials of Old Testament history as well.

But most of all, the growth of Old Testament religion is traced, with its unique conception of God, its high ideals of conduct, and its preparation for the fuller manifestation of the divine character and purpose in the ministry of Jesus.

Each chapter presents a definite portion of Scripture for class or individual study, and a treatment of the particular theme and the text in relation to the general subject of the course. A series of questions to serve as a basis for the teacher's work, or as an aid to the student,

a list of additional topics for papers or further study, and a brief bibliography will be found in the appendix, in sections corresponding to those in the body of the work.

One of the distinct advantages of this course of studies is the arrangement of the characters, events and writings as nearly as possible in the order in which they appear historically, rather than the order of the Old Testament books. As a result of the study of this series, one ought to have a fairly clear and connected knowledge of the great moral and spiritual leaders of the Old Testament, and the contribution each made to the higher life of Israel and the world.

The series of chapters included in this volume and the one which follows it constitute a survey of the entire prophetic ministry of Israel.

I.

THE PROPHETS AND THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Text for Special Study, Isaiah 5.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE Hebrew nation was one of the Semitic peoples, related to the Babylonians, Assyrians, Arabs, Phoenicians and Canaanites. A considerable body of literature was produced by this people between the tenth and second centuries before Christ. All of these writings that have survived are collected in a body, and comprise what is known by the Jews today as the Scriptures, and by Christians as the Old Testament. There are thirty-nine books or sections in this collection. These works are probably but a small part of the total Hebrew literature. But their value lies in their character as religious writings, and to this fact they doubtless owe their survival when the other books of the nation were allowed to perish. In this collection are found both prose and poetry, narratives, meditations, hymns, laws, sermons, laments and apocalyptic visions.

A careful classification of the literature of the Old Testament includes seven kinds of writing, as follows: Prophetic histories, prophetic messages, devotional and elegiac writings, wisdom books, legal books, priestly histories, and apocalypses. The Jews of Jesus' day divided their Scriptures into the "Law" (the first five books, generally known formerly as the Pentateuch); the "Prophets" (including both the prophetic histories and messages); and the "Psalms" (the remaining books, first among which came the Book of Psalms, giving its name

to the entire group). This threefold division was referred to by Jesus (Luke 24:44).

THE TEACHERS OF ISRAEL.

There were three classes of teachers among the Hebrew people.

I. The Prophets were the most important, for in a peculiar sense they were the moral and religious leaders of the nation. They were not of any one tribe, section or class in Israel, and varied as greatly in their abilities, devotion and success as have the ministers of the Christian faith. But they kept alive the religion of Jehovah in ages when it was in danger either from the invasion of foreign idolatries, or from the tendency to reduce it to ritual and form. As voiced by one of their number, their task was "to declare unto Jacob his transgressions, and to Israel his sin" (Mic. 3:8). It is with the prophets and their work that this series of studies deals.

II. The Priests were administrators of religion on its formal side. At first every father had the right of priestly service. In fact any male member of the family might be set apart for this task in his own family. Later, no doubt because of the influence of Moses' name, and the zeal of his clan, the tribe of Levi was gradually accorded the right of service in the priesthood. As time went on it became their function to have charge of the sanctuary, offer the sacrifices, order the ritual of private or public worship, give oracles in the name of God, teach the ordinances of the law, and often act as judges in cases of litigation where there was no convenient tribunal (Deut. 33:8, 10).

III. The Sages were the men of wisdom, the teachers who devoted themselves to public instruction upon the questions of general and individual welfare. In Israel, as among other nations, there was a class or profession known as the Wise, whose counsel might be obtained in emergencies, much as legal advisers are consulted today.

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The Wisdom Writings that survive to us in the Old Testament are the products of their reflection and literary activity. Reference is made to the value of their instruction as teachers of groups or as private tutors (e. g. Eccl. 12:9-11).

These three classes of teachers or leaders are referred to more than once in the Old Testament, as in the case of the popular protest against Jeremiah, who was understood to set himself against them all: "Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet" (Jer. 18:18).

GENERAL NATURE OF PROPHETIC WORK.

Unlike the priests, the prophets belonged to no particular tribe, wore no official garments, and held no administrative position. Unlike the sages, the prophets frequented no designated places, such as the city gates and the schools of discussion. At first the prophets seem to have been for the most part wandering companies of unlettered men, like those met by Saul near Gibeah (1 Sam. 10:10-13), or those who tarried with Samuel at Ramah (1 Sam. 19:18-24). These earliest groups of Hebrew prophets shared most of the ecstatic and unregulated features of general Semitic prophecy, and bore but little resemblance to the great leaders like Moses, Samuel and Nathan, who were their saner and more competent contemporaries.

Later on, perhaps through the efforts of such leaders, they gradually abandoned their wandering, mendicant life, and settled in communities like Ramah, Bethel and Jericho. From these centers they were able to perform many of the duties of religious instruction in remoter districts which the greater prophets could not reach.

At first the ordinary prophets held religious services of a highly emotional character. Their "prophesying" was hardly more than excited and ecstatic speech, accompanied and incited by wild dances, and the sound of

crude instruments of music. In fact, to "prophesy" and to "rave" were two ideas denoted by the same word in the common speech. But presently these orgiastic features gave way to more ordered behavior, as the interest of the prophets rose from mere tribal enthusiasm, the practice of divination, and rude preaching to ethical and religious concern. The grosser features of ignorance and fanaticism disappeared under the influence of instruction of the saner and more purposeful men of God. The groups of prophets, localized in the towns where the greater prophets had preached, became the centers of enlightenment for the nation, and seem to have developed into schools, which have generally been known as "the schools of the prophets."

THE GREATER PROPHETS.

Of the large number of prophets of the ordinary class just described there are many glimpses given in the Old Testament, as will be seen. But the prophets whose names are best known to us were of a more commanding sort, and were only related to the ruder type of preachers as they tried to bring them under their influence, restrain their emotional extravagances, and use them for the furtherance of the work of religious instruction.

The great prophets, like Moses, Samuel, Ahijah and Elijah, were incomparably above these wandering enthusiasts. In spite of their manifest limitations, they had larger and more adequate conceptions of the divine will. They spoke of God's purpose with an intelligence and awareness impossible to their humbler brethren. But they also saw the possibilities which lay in these rude and fanatical strollers, and found it worth while to mold them to higher uses. At last, in the days of Elisha the "sons of the prophets," i. e., these prophetic communities, were the most useful instruments for public education and the creation of rational ideals.

Meanwhile the level of prophecy steadily rose, through the activities of the men whose names have become

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familiar. Amos and Hosea, the first of the writing prophets, appeared. Then came Isaiah and Micah, the reformers of Judah. With the decline of the state, Jeremiah brought his warning message, and in the exile Ezekiel and his fellow preachers kept the flame of religion burning, even after the altar had been destroyed. With the revival of Judah there came new voices like Haggai and Zechariah, and the long period that closed the Old Testament and ushered in Judaism heard still other notes of insistence from prophets like Malachi, Joel and Jonah. Thus, even as had been promised by Moses (Deut. 18:15), God from time to time raised up prophets to speak for him to the nation.

THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS.

There are two kinds of books in the Old Testament containing the writings of prophets. In the classification given in Section I, above, they are called the Prophetic Histories and the Prophetic Messages, respectively. The first include those books, like Judges, Samuel and Kings, which were written by prophets to illustrate God's method of teaching the dangers and penalties of sin. These books deal with the national experiences, but only in brief, and it is their purpose to employ the moral and religious values of the record.

The second class includes those books that bear the name of some prophet, like Micah, Ezekiel, or Nahum, and contain such of his written messages as have survived to us. The Jews spoke of the first class of books as "The Former Prophets," and of the second as "The Latter Prophets." The studies of this course employ all the material in both these groups, and such other prophetic instruction as is afforded by other sections of the Old Testament, like the Psalms.

An example of prophetic preaching is given in Isa. 5, the passage that serves as our text for special study in connection with this chapter.

II.

BEGINNINGS OF PROPHETIC WORK.

Text for Special Study, I Samuel 10:1-13.

PROPHETS IN OTHER NATIONS.

THE order of prophets was not confined to Israel. In most nations of antiquity there were men who discharged the functions of priests, augurs, soothsayers and prophets. Particularly was this true among the Semitic peoples to whom Israel was closely related. These men, both in Israel and other lands, may be divided roughly into three classes, though it is not always possible to keep the distinction clear.

I. There were first the diviners or fortune-tellers. Such men, and sometimes women, practiced the arts of divining, giving oracles, and offering counsel in the emergencies of life to individuals or communities. They were supposed to have access to the divine will through certain rites which they performed. Among these were the inspection of the livers of sacrificial animals, to read in their markings the mind of deity; the shaking of arrows; converse with teraphim (Ezek. 21:21); watching the movements of water in a divining cup (Gen. 44:2, 5); responses by means of colors in a sacred stone (Urim, 1 Sam. 28:6); the casting of lots (1 Sam. 10:17f; 14:42); and the various forms of spiritism practiced in antiquity (1 Sam. 28:3). Among the Assyrians and other nations, dreams and oracles of other sorts were understood to convey the divine will to men. Such direction was sought by kings upon important occasions. These crude appeals to the divine will Israel shared at

first with its neighbors. It was understood that a seer could locate lost articles for a reward (1 Sam. 9:5-10). Ahab summoned the prophets to inquire for him the outcome of his expedition against Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 22:5, 6). The two forms of divining which were considered permissible in Israel were the Urim and the lot. Properly used, they were restricted to priestly service.

II. There were also prophets of the wild, ecstatic type, who wrought themselves into frenzy by music or violent movements of the body, or shouting. The conduct of the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel was characteristic of this order of men (1 Kings 18:26, 28). The modern dervish in Mohammedan and other eastern lands is an example of the same low order of prophecy. Something of this nature was seen in the bands of enthusiasts who roamed about in Israel in early times. They used the crude musical instruments of their age, and by their wild and ecstatic conduct exercised a compelling, almost hypnotic, influence even upon people of more ordered and unemotional sort (1 Sam. 10:5-13; 19:20-24). When Saul met the prophets he was drawn irresistibly into their circle, and to the astonishment of all, joined in their frenzied dances. The low esteem in which this kind of prophets was popularly held in Israel is shown by the disdain expressed in such terms as "this mad fellow" (2 Kings 9:11), and the impatience of men of other social classes at the reproofs given by such eccentric religionists (1 Kings 20:35-43).

III. A third variety of prophets, more closely related to the great prophetic teachers of Israel, is found among other nations. The Old Testament recognizes in Balaam a foreigner who was nevertheless gifted with true prophetic powers of divining and interpreting the will of God. He was brought by the king of Moab from the distant east, and was promised a large fee for his services in putting a ban or curse on Israel (Num. 22:2-7). From Egypt also there come evidences that on occasion men of

the common classes spoke out fearlessly against the oppression of rulers with much the same passion as Amos or Micah. Yet all such instances from other peoples fall far short of the moral insight and religious fervor which are to be found among the Hebrew prophets.

THE TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE PROPHETIC WORK.

The word which is translated "prophet" in the Old Testament signifies "one who speaks," or "utters" a message. There seems to inhere in it the sense of proclaiming in behalf of another. The prophet was therefore a commissioned speaker or preacher. In the Hebrew mind a prophet was one who made known the will of Jehovah or Jahveh, the God of the nation. He was no mere mouthpiece of deity, speaking forth oracles which he did not understand. He was rather an interpreter of God's purpose, who by intelligent comprehension of the divine program was enabled to speak with authority to his people regarding the errors into which the individual and society were betrayed, and of the method by which the good will of God might be realized.

At times the message was like a "burden" upon the prophets, urging them on with divine compulsion. But they were never mechanically controlled. They were free men, to speak or to remain silent, and they recognized the clear distinction between their own wills and the divine ideals of which they were the revealers. They spoke of their preaching as the "vision," "oracle," or "word" of Jehovah. By this they meant to express their conviction that the message they made known was from God. They had paid the price of long and earnest meditation upon the divine purposes for their generation, and felt no hesitance in claiming authority for their preaching by the use of such expressions as, "Thus saith Jehovah," and, "The Word of the Lord."

They drew freely upon their own experience and the life of the nation for illustrations of their message. They used past, present and future events to enforce

their teaching. They employed their own individual vocabulary, point of view and knowledge of conditions to make clear their meaning to the people. They were dependent upon the ordinary means of information for whatever knowledge they possessed. But the measure of moral insight and religious urgency to which they attained as students in the school of God, made them competent to lead the people to fuller comprehension of moral and religious obligations.

They were not infallible teachers, for they could utter only the truth they understood and felt to be the lesson for the times. Sometimes the prophets of one age corrected and amplified the partial and imperfect views of their predecessors. But in the measure of their capacity and openness of mind the great prophets were led by the spirit of God, and gradually lifted the nation to higher levels of faith and conduct.

THE RELATION OF PREDICTION TO PROPHECY.

The view that the essence of the work of the prophet was the prediction of the future is an error. It is not justified by the work of the prophets nor by the history of the word. The prophets made use of the future, as they did of the past and the present, in illustrating and enforcing their preaching. But prediction was only a small part of their work, and in fact entered but little into the ministry of the greater prophets. It is part of the task of these studies to give full value to the unusual and startling activities of the prophets, such as prediction and the performance of works of power. But the more closely the student observes their ministry, the more he is impressed with the human elements of conviction, devotion, self-forgetfulness, reforming zeal, patience and optimism which characterize their labors.

Prediction and marvel were only incidents of their lives. Their serious and consistent concern was the religious education of the nation, and its gradual elevation

in thought and life, not by means of the supernatural and marvelous, but by the steady pressure of public instruction. It is a misfortune that the word "prophecy," which both in the Bible and in our English speech signifies "preaching," should have been narrowed in certain usages to the mere circle of prediction. To use it with this limited meaning is to lose its richest and most fundamental value.

THE METHODS OF THE PROPHETS.

It is evident that the work of the prophets was not limited to prediction, nor to the utterance of the divine will in a mechanical manner, as if they were the instruments of divine dictation. Nor are the results of prophetic activity to be attributed to the genius of these religious teachers. This term fails entirely to explain the power which they exercised. Rather were they men who were concerned to impart to the people of their times the will of God as they understood it, and it is the insistent claim of the Old Testament that the prophets whom it names and whose work it describes were guided in some true sense by the divine purpose.

In imparting their messages to the people they made use of various methods. They commonly preached, wherever they could gain a hearing, and the books that bear the names of the greater prophets are for the most part collections of sermons, or public addresses. Sometimes they wrote out or dictated their oracles, especially in times when they could not speak in person (Jer. 30:1, 2; 36:1f). They also wrote letters containing similar warnings and exhortations (Jer. 29:1; 2 Chron. 2:1-12). For purposes of illustration and enforcement they made use of symbolic names and actions, which attracted public attention, and made clearer their meaning. All these facts will be made clear as the studies proceed.

THE RELATION OF THE PROPHET TO HIS TIME.

It follows from what has been said that the prophets were primarily concerned with their own age and people.

They were not living and preaching for the future, save in an indirect way. Their task lay in the present. They labored to create nobler ideals of individual, domestic and social life. They taught that righteousness was the quality most of all to be approved in character. Upon the nature of God as personal, concerned with the welfare of Israel, yet world-wide in power and love, holy and faithful to his covenants, they laid supreme emphasis, and, withal, they looked forward to better days, when the will of God would be realized more fully, when good would prevail and evil be overcome.

This hope gradually took form as the expectation of a golden or messianic age to come, and became more definite through the centuries. But the prophets usually thought of this better time as near at hand, and to be realized through the arousal of the nation to nobler aims and efforts in their own times. Thus all the work of the prophets was related closely to the age in which they lived. They were identified with the various social classes and political parties of their day. It is obvious that any adequate knowledge of the work of the prophets must rest upon competent acquaintance with the circumstances in which they moved, and the social and political conditions by which they were environed.

III.

MOSES AND ISRAEL.

Text for Special Study, Exodus 3.

ISRAEL'S PRIMITIVE RELIGION.

THE people who under the name of Israel took possession of Canaan about twelve centuries before Christ, were of the Semitic race, closely related to the inhabitants of Arabia and the Euphrates valley. The leader who exerted a formative influence upon the people, and brought them to self-consciousness as a nation was Moses, the first of the great prophets. Yet the tribes which he organized into something of national unity had already a body of customs, beliefs, and traditions, as an inheritance from Semitic ancestors.

Originally the clans had emigrated from the region north of the Persian Gulf. But for some centuries they had lived as nomads and herdsmen in Canaan, Egypt and the desert. Their religious customs were much like those of their Semitic kindred, among whom religion was largely the result of social custom, to which there was added the sanction of supernatural powers. The conception of deity was not clear; nevertheless it exerted a profound influence upon daily life. Certain spots were invested with a sacred character in virtue of the traditions which connected them with the appearance of divine beings. Hence grew up the belief in sacred stones, trees, wells and fountains. Such a place was a "beth-el," a holy spot, or "house of God" (Gen. 28:16-19). Here it was deemed proper to offer sacrifices.

The altar, which was at first a sacred stone, regarded

perhaps as the abode of deity, was later the cairn or rock table on which food offerings were placed, and finally the object on which the gift was consumed by fire. One of the common customs to which constant reference is made, was the erection of pillars or obelisks, and poles or stakes, which were perhaps artificial symbols of the presence of deity. The sites on which these shrines were placed were usually elevations, either natural or constructed, the "high places" of evil repute in later days.

In the early period images of deity were used in the worship; but with the refinement of religion they fell under prophetic disapproval. Certain times were regarded as sacred. Among them were the appearance of the new moon, the four phases of the moon from which the seven-day week doubtless was derived, and the changes of the seasons which were marked by the important feasts. Marriage had the sanction of long usage, polygamy was freely practiced, and slavery was common. Circumcision was a tribal mark, the avoidance of certain foods as "taboo" or forbidden was obligatory, and the custom of blood revenge was held essential to tribal welfare. Offerings of blood, oil, food, and sacred animals were made at the holy places, and even the custom of human sacrifice was recognized, and had survivals in the Old Testament period.

The religious belief of the early Semites was neither monotheism nor polytheism, but rather the worship of a tribal or national god by each people. This custom, called monolatry, prevailed among the Hebrews till displaced by the monotheism of the prophets. The name given to the God who became the deity of Israel was Jahveh, or Jehovah, but in the early period the Hebrews regarded him as but one of the many gods. Even in this early age, however, the sex dualism prevailing among the neighboring peoples, which assigned a goddess to every god, and led to grave irregularities of moral conduct on the part of the people, was comparatively

unknown among the Hebrews. While therefore the religion of Israel had many points of contact with that of the surrounding peoples, it was marked by a higher view of deity and a purer ethical standard. It was at least a foundation upon which the prophets could rear the noble structure of later days.

THE PATRIARCHS.

But the Hebrews of Moses' day had not only a body of religious custom and belief, but as well a group of traditions regarding the earlier experience of the world and of their own ancestors. Their close connection with Babylon, from which they had emigrated, as well as the influence of the Babylonians in Canaan, tended to make the mythology and cosmogony of the Euphrates valley a common possession. The stories of creation, the beginnings of history, the dawn of civilization, the catastrophe of the flood, and the dispersion of tribes and dialects were parts of their inheritance, and were later embodied in their literature (Gen. 1-11).

But of even greater interest to them were the traditions gathered about certain important men in their own earlier experience. The patriarchs, especially Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, were not only regarded as the successive leaders of the clans from which the nation sprung, but as well the embodiment of the qualities held in regard by the people. Abraham is once called a prophet (Gen. 20:7), but hardly in the higher religious sense. He stands as the representative of such a consciousness of God as became the outstanding feature of Israel's history. Our sources affirm that in the strength of his faith in the Unseen, he left his home in the rich and cultured east to take up the hard and meagre career of a herdsman in a rough and unknown land. This sense of a divine call, the abandonment of a life of ease for one of hardship and the choice of the open spaces of nature rather than the confining air of towns, constitute the contribu-

tions made by the story of Abraham to the people who called themselves his children. In such a nature, with all its faults, there was a moral intensity which went far to form the character of the nation, or at any rate, to reveal the traits which came to be most highly prized by the prophetic historians of later times. Moreover, it must be kept in mind that conduct which we might deem worthy of censure was often regarded with approval by the writers of the record. But there is discerned a growing sensitiveness to ethical values in the successive strata of the material.

Nor is this ethical element lost to sight in any of the patriarchal narratives. The quiet career of Isaac, the long and hard discipline of Jacob, from the days of his deceit and flight to the time of his chastened return and final struggle, and the admirable character of Joseph as blameless youth and trusted viceroy, all convey the same lessons of the sleepless providence and moral exactitude of the God whom these men adored, and to whose worship it was the task of the narrators to call the mind of Israel. The historical value of the records is of far less significance than the ethical and religious ideals they reveal.

THE YOUTH OF MOSES.

The sources from which the books relating to the early period of Hebrew history are compiled are threefold. Two are prophetic narratives of the ninth and eighth centuries respectively, and the third is a priestly writing of the fifth century B. C. In the narratives of the age of Moses, these sources are combined by writers who harmonized as far as possible the varying conceptions of the different periods from which their sources were taken, in the spirit of the later and more enlightened times in which they themselves lived. The presence, therefore, of variant and even conflicting elements in the narratives does not occasion the difficulty they would cause in a single and authoritative record. But the careful investi-

gation to which the documents of the Old Testament have been subjected warrants the conviction that in their essential features the narratives may be regarded as reliable.

These records affirm that after some period of migratory life in Canaan, the Hebrew clans made their way to Egypt, where greater abundance of provision was to be found. In process of time, however, the feeling of the Egyptians toward foreigners was less friendly (Ex. 1:1-2:15). Gradually they were subjected to suspicion and hostility, until at length they were reduced to the condition of serfs, and compelled to labor upon the engineering works of the Pharaoh in the construction of his treasure cities of Pithom and Raamses. If, as has been supposed, the Pharaoh of the oppression was Rameses II, the incidents of the exodus, although unmentioned on the Egyptian monuments, fell in one of the most important periods of the history of that land. The experiences of the Hebrews grew ever harder to bear, until at length the destruction of all their male children was decreed.

"When the tale of bricks is doubled, then comes Moses," has become a proverb. For it was at this moment, when the burden seemed beyond bearing, that Moses was born in one of the clans of the Hebrews. The greatness of the services rendered by him to his people made it inevitable that the spirit of devotion to his memory would preserve or contrive a series of marvels in connection with his infancy and youth. The romantic narratives recorded in Exodus regarding his birth, preservation, adoption by an Egyptian princess, and education in the court of the Pharaoh are modest in comparison with the later Jewish traditions of his beauty, cleverness, military genius and political promise. It is enough to affirm that to great natural endowments he was able to add such educational discipline as made

him competent to assume the leadership of his people when occasion offered.

MOSES IN MIDIAN.

The events which were most valuable in preparing Moses for his career as leader and teacher were the very ones which seemed at first to render forever impossible any such work. He had reached manhood, and was keenly interested in the problem of the hard estate to which his people were reduced. Touched by their misery he seems to have planned some measures for their relief. Did he go so far as to organize them into preparation for an uprising against their oppressors? Was it his plan to give the signal by some act of his own at the moment when all things were ready? Was the striking down of the Egyptian the sign by which he intended to summon them to action? Such, at any rate, seems to have been the later tradition, as expressed by Stephen in his review of the national history (Ex. 2:15-4:28; Acts 7:25).

But the people were too depressed to seize the moment of opportunity, and Moses was compelled to escape the consequences of his act. He fled from the land and took refuge with a nomadic tribe to the east of the Gulf of Akaba, the region of Midian. Here he found a home, and remained for many years, marrying the daughter of the sheikh and living the life of a shepherd. Somewhere in that region rose the sacred mountain of Sinai or Horeb. The location of this mountain has never been known, though tradition, now regarded with suspicion, placed it in the peninsula between the Gulfs of Akaba and Suez. Perhaps it is to be located much further north. But it was believed by the people of the region, as by the Hebrews of later days, to be the dwelling place of Jahveh or Jehovah.

The earliest appearance of this name of deity in our biblical records is in connection with the experiences of Moses in Midian. Was the worship of God practiced

under this name by that people? Or was the new name of really older origin than Moses' time?

The special selection of Scripture set apart as the center of the present study (Ex. 3) relates to the experience of the shepherd Moses at the sacred mountain. Thither he had come with his flock, when his attention was attracted by a bush that burned and was not consumed. It was a prophetic symbol of the people with whose future his name was to be closely linked. With the prostration of a worshiper he came near, putting off his sandals, as was the custom. And there came to him in that hour the call to his supreme task. He had heard of the God of his ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He had heard of the hopes they once cherished for a home in the fair land of Canaan, where now other and powerful nations lived.

But the people were in bondage in a strange land, their God had been silent for long, and he who had dreamed of a career as leader of his nation was an exile among Midianite shepherds. In that one hour of his life, however, these great ideals—God, the nation, the land of their desire, and himself as leader—were all linked together in a summons that thrilled him to the heart. And yet who was he, to undertake this mighty task? Years before he had thought himself ready for the exploit. But now he felt out of touch with all the activities of the world. What value was there in the life of mountain solitudes to fit a man for the stress and struggle of such a career?

Yet, in spite of his misgivings, he had been the best of preparation for his task. After all that human universities can do to train men—and they can do much—there is a graduate course in the school of silence and of God to which the elect among the prophets are summoned. And Moses was of this group. In that hour, at the foot of Sinai, he felt the burden laid upon him. He knew something of what it would require, and much of his own inadequacy. But the call was thrilling him with

its summons to a supreme duty. He would have to assemble and convince the leaders of the people. He must tell them of the new Name. Henceforth they were to know their God no longer by the cold and colorless title of Elohim (Deity), but by the warm and personal name of Jahveh, Jehovah the ever-living, the God of past and future, the mysterious Giver of ever new and unexpected blessing.

In spite of all obstacles of king and people, Moses could not deny the urgency of the call. It was a summons to a higher service than national leadership. It was no open door to selfish ambition. It was the arousal of a great soul to the privilege of training a nation to higher ethical and religious life; of making it the instrument through which God could speak to all the world.

IV.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE NATION.

Text for Special Study, Deuteronomy 1.

LITERARY SOURCES.

THE story of the life and work of Moses is contained in the four books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which with Genesis compose what is usually known as the Pentateuch, and were by Jewish tradition held to be the "Five Books of Moses." The ultimate relation of these books to the Book of Joshua has led most modern scholars to recognize the first six, rather than the first five, as the members of one literary group, to which the name Hexateuch has been given. These books contain not only the various bodies of legal institutes which came into being in the course of Hebrew history, but as well an account of the origins and antiquities of the nation, its worship, its political usages and its social arrangements. The fact that certain sections laid claim to Mosaic authorship (Ex. 17:14; 24:4), and that much of the law of Deuteronomy was couched in the form of a public address of Moses, and purported to have been written down by him, was the basis of the Jewish view that he had written the whole, not only of the laws, but of the five books in which they are contained. This view is unsupported by the facts, and is in direct contrast to the contents of the books themselves.

Like the life of Jesus in the New Testament, the story of Moses' period is told in four different works, which are combined in the account given in the Hexateuch. These were (1) a prophetic record, written in the King-

dom of Judah in the ninth century, B. C.; (2) a prophetic record from the Northern Kingdom, a century later; (3) a work of priests and prophets of the seventh century, and (4) a priestly writing of the fifth century, B. C. These are called the Judean, the Ephraimite, the Deuteronomic and the Priestly writings respectively. They have the same types of variation seen in the four Gospels, heightened of course by the considerable intervals separating them, and by the intervening growth of moral and religious ideals.

DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

When Moses appeared again among the Hebrews in Egypt after his life in Midian, he was mature in years and disciplined by the solitudes and hardships of the desert. He undertook at once to arouse his people to the need of a supreme attempt to escape from the oppression of their lot to the freedom of that wilderness with which he was so familiar. Moreover he boldly demanded of the Pharaoh the release of the people. Possessed of some of the secrets of that thaumaturgy which the priesthood of Egypt was able to turn to its profit in works of magic, and emboldened by the justice of his plea, Moses did not hesitate to insist that the Hebrews should be allowed to depart from Egypt freely as they had come. This demand was powerfully aided by a series of disasters which befell the land at this time, and which Moses boldly claimed as the tokens of the wrath of Jehovah upon the oppressors of his people (Ex. 4:29-15:21).

It was once thought necessary to insist that the plagues were the direct and supernatural visitations of divine indignation upon an offending land, and such undoubtedly was the view of the biblical writers who recounted the whole transaction in the light of Israel's later history. They were even at pains to give vividness to the narrative by such details and embellishments as took form in the oral transmission of tradition. But biblical scholars, the most reverent and even the most conservative,

are now concerned to point out the correspondence between the events here described and the disasters to which that land has been more or less accustomed through the centuries, and to affirm that the significance of the experience consisted in the providential opportuneness of the plagues and the masterful use made of them by Moses.

In the meantime preparations for departure had been made by the Hebrews, under the leader's urgent direction, and when all was in readiness they set out, to the number of some thousands, headed toward the eastern frontier of Egypt. It seems probable that the Gulf of Suez extended much further north than at present, in what was later known as the Gulf of Heroopolis, that may have reached as far as the Bitter Lakes. Perhaps this route was chosen to avoid the Egyptian forts further north, and as the easiest means of reaching the freedom of the desert. Here, however, they encountered a new danger, shut in as they were between the waters that lay before them, and an approaching detachment of Egyptian troops sent to bring them back. But seizing the moment when the waters were driven back by strong winds, Moses brought his people in safety across the shallows, while their pursuers were overwhelmed by the returning waves. So great an impression did these events make upon the minds of the people that they constituted the chief theme of song and story for centuries, and were elaborated with poetic and inventive skill as they were rehearsed through the generations (cf. Ex. 15).

The more the exodus is studied, not merely as a series of wonders, but as the work of a great leader, rousing his people to undertake a difficult and dangerous enterprise, and inspiring them with a sense of loyalty to himself and the God of their fathers, the more impressive does it appear. It was the basis for instructions that were never wholly forgotten. That Jehovah was their God, personal and concerned for their welfare; that he

was powerful enough to safeguard his people and overthrow their enemies; and that he required of them obedience to his will, were the lessons of this great deliverance. To days very far down their history the nation knew their God as the one "who brought them out of the land of Egypt by a strong hand and with a stretched-out arm" (Psalm 136:11, 12).

THE SCHOOL OF THE DESERT.

The route of the people on their way from Egypt is not easily traced. It is clear that Moses led them to Mount Sinai or Horeb, the scene of his own awakening to his mission, and the ancient shrine of Jehovah. But the location of Mount Sinai is one of the open questions of biblical geography. Was it southeast of Egypt, between the gulfs of Suez and Akaba, as tradition has affirmed, or was it further north, in the region of Edom? The answer is yet to be supplied. But at this mountain Moses was not far from his former desert home, and the Midianite clans to which he was related (Ex. 15:22-19:25; 31:18-34:9; Num. 11:1-14:45; 33:1-36).

Of the numbers of the Hebrews at this time it is difficult to form an estimate. The figures given in our sources seem far too high. A few thousands is the utmost population that the scanty vegetation in the few fertile spots east of Egypt could sustain. But reports of numbers are easily enlarged in the oral repetition of experiences, as the Old Testament abundantly proves. However, it was in the desert that Israel became a nation. No doubt the clans that came out of Egypt were swelled by the addition of desert groups. But the miscellaneous multitude was welded together into some semblance of unity and self-consciousness during this period, and always traced its origin to Egypt and the desert.

There were many hard experiences. There were sufferings for lack of food and water. There were struggles with hostile tribes like Amalek. There were revolts and relapses from the national program, from the religion

of Jehovah, and from the personal leadership of Moses. Tradition affirmed that even Aaron, the leader's brother, yielded to popular clamor and made an image of Jehovah. But Moses went on with his work of giving the people a larger conception of their obligations and their opportunities. He taught them the simple institutes suitable for their condition. He inspired them with something of his own vision and enthusiasm. In fact nothing could more clearly prove the greatness of this man of God than the fact that his tall figure cast its shadow down the national history to its remotest limits; that he was regarded as the first and greatest of the prophets (Hos. 12:13); and that popular and approved tradition made him the giver of all the laws of Israel. Even statutes that took form centuries after his time were assigned to him and tradition attempted to describe their origin on specific occasions in the life of the ancient hero.

What Moses' relation may have been even to the first of the three codes of law that successively served as the norm of conduct in Israel we are as yet unaware. That the later laws, those of Deuteronomy and the Priest Code, could have been "Mosaic" only in a derived sense is evident. But this fact makes still more conspicuous the greatness of a leader who could so impress his personality on the youthful tribes that they never escaped from the spell of his name or the moulding influence of his life. Whatever facts may lie behind those cherished traditions of mountain ascents, long periods of fasting, personal converse with God amid the splendors and terrors of storm clouds, and tablets graven with the divine finger, the title of "Moses the Lawgiver" will always seem appropriate and convincing, and this figure, so often set forth in marble or upon canvas, with the horned rays of light and the two stone slabs carved with

the "Ten Words," will be the most august in the ranks of Old Testament heroes.

THE APPROACH TO CANAAN.

A generation of time was passed by Israel in the desert. According to the traditions most of this time was spent in the vicinity of Kadesh-barnea, some fifty miles south of Beer-sheba. Canaan, the lofty territory between the Mediterranean and the Jordan, was the garden spot of all that region. For centuries the desert tribes had looked with envious eyes upon it, or rushed in to seize its undefended parts as occasion offered. Here the patriarchs had dwelt in earlier times, here, if the hints of Egyptian records are to be trusted, some of the Hebrews had remained, and here Israel hoped to find its future possessions. But a deputation sent to investigate the character of the land and its people brought back a gloomy report. Canaan was desirable, but too well defended for them to attack. There was division of opinion regarding the matter. A premature attempt to invade the mountain region from the south resulted disastrously. But the years of desert life were not without value in preparing the tribes for the strenuous work ahead. They converted a horde of untrained serfs into a hardy, aggressive and eager nation. And in all of this preparation, both material and moral, the influence of Moses is evident (Deut. 1:1-3:32).

The final movement which brought Israel to the border of Canaan was made not from the south, the more direct way, but by a roundabout journey which ended from the southeast at the Jordan north of the Dead Sea. They avoided the territories of the kindred tribes of Edom and Moab, though they did not wholly escape the malice of these people, as the story of Balaam shows. But upon the Amorite districts east of the Jordan they threw themselves and succeeded in gaining possession of the entire region, including the strong cities of Heshbon and Edrei. In this excellent grazing country certain of the

clans preferred to remain, leaving the rest of the host to attempt the more difficult occupation of the west-Jordan land.

MOSES AS LEADER AND PROPHET.

With the arrival of Israel on the east side of the Jordan, the career of their great leader came to an end. Moses had taken them in the estate of raw and enslaved clans, had encouraged them to attempt the career of a free people, had guided them through an experience which fitted them to become a nation, and then left them with his counsels still in their ears. He had asked nothing for himself. He made no effort to fix any succession of power in his family. But he gave them what was far more valuable, the imperishable influence of his life and teachings (Deut. 4:1-40; 34).

The question is often asked whether Moses is to be regarded as a historical person, or only an imaginary figure, the embodiment of the ideals of early Israel. The answer is to be found in the fact that the life and leadership of Moses seem to be required to account for the beginnings of the national life of Israel. Without him it would be difficult to explain the gathering of the scattered and spiritless Hebrews into such a host as presently made Canaan its own. But far more is Moses required to account for the ethical and religious possessions of Israel in that and succeeding generations.

To be sure he did not give to Israel its religion. That, at least to a degree, it already possessed. Moses never claimed to be the revealer of a new faith. He constantly spoke of himself as the interpreter and friend of the God of Abraham, their ancestor. But he made clear certain new and impressive aspects of the religion of Jehovah. To him Deity was no mere abstraction. The God to be worshiped and preached was living, personal and deeply concerned in the welfare of his people. To Jehovah there was no distinction between the religious

and the common things of life, for all conduct was conditioned by religious considerations.

The religion of Israel, as it received the impress of Moses' personality, had no mythology, no sex dualism, no human sacrifices, and no degradation of womanhood as a rite. Its simplicity and purity were in notable contrast with the features of other religions of that age. Much of this higher ethical level in the faith of Israel may be justly credited to Moses. When therefore the writer of Deuteronomy in later years, looking back upon the checkered history of religion among his people, wished to describe its most impressive and inspiring personality, he wrote, "There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10).

It is this man, at the close of his career, bidding farewell to the people he had led so long, who speaks the message of Deuteronomy 1, the passage that seems to sum up better than any other the work of his life. The book was written centuries later, but with the distinct object of making the life and message of the great prophet a living influence in an age that needed the revival of his ideals. And we may well believe that it was written in words, some of which had lingered long in the memories and traditions of the nation, and may well have come down from Moses himself. The effect of Deuteronomy as a restatement of the great themes of Moses' life, applied to a new and urgent occasion, is one of the proofs of the vital character of the prophet's work. With that occasion and its issues a later chapter of this series of studies will deal.

V.

THE RISE OF SAMUEL

Text for Special Study, I Samuel 3.

THE OCCUPATION OF CANAAN.

ABOUT 1200 B. C. the clans of Israel moved in from the region east of the Jordan to occupy the land of Canaan. The territory which bears that name in the earliest period of the national history lies at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, along the southern third of the coast. It was the northeastern portion of the great parallelogram of Arabia, and its most fertile part. Its main feature is the central mountain ridge that extends from the Lebanons on the north to the Tih plateau south of Beersheba. This range rises between the sea and the deep trench of the Jordan.

It is only a small country, about 140 miles from north to south, and on the average 50 miles from east to west. It is about the size of Connecticut, or of Wales. As compared with western and cultivated districts its soil was not rich, but to the desert tribes it seemed like a garden, "a land flowing with milk and honey." It had great variety of elevation, from the heights of Hermon, snow-covered throughout the year, to the depths of the Jordan valley, probably the deepest of all dry depressions on the planet.

The life of Canaan, vegetable and animal, was as varied as its surface. Several races inhabited the country in that age. The primitive populations, variously called Rephaim, Emim, Horites, Anakim, etc., had only local and fragmentary possessions. They probably rep-

resented successive invasions at earlier periods. Later the Hittites had swept in from the north, and several communities of these people still survived. Then came the great Semitic wave. Its chief clans in the days of the exodus were the Canaanites, who occupied the lowlands of the coast and the Jordan, and gave their name to the entire country; and the Amorites, who lived in the central mountain region. Later still, and only a few generations before the days of Moses, came another Semitic inroad, including the first Hebrew clans and the closely related tribes of Ammon, Moab and Edom, who settled for the most part in the less strongly defended districts east of the Jordan.

Through these same east-Jordan regions the Israelites, strengthened by the experience of Egypt and the discipline of the desert, and reinforced by certain of the Midianite groups, had now come to the Jordan valley north of the Dead Sea. Under the leadership of Moses they had obtained considerable holdings of pasture lands on the east side of the river, and there some of the tribes were content to remain. But after the death of Moses, the main body, under Joshua and other leaders, pushed on up the steep rock barrier into the heights of the western part of Canaan.

About the same period the Philistines seem to have landed on the southern coast, and settled along the sea in the south-west portion of Canaan. Traditions preserved in the Old Testament assert that they came from Caphtor or Crete. They are usually called "the uncircumcised" in our records, which makes probable their non-Semitic origin. But in later days the Greeks understood that they were the chief race in Canaan, and called the country, after their name, "Palistia" or Palestine.

The Canaanite civilization was much older than the Hebrew, and far superior to it. But the vigor of Israel, and the enthusiasm born of such leadership as that of Moses, availed to secure for the people a foothold in

the land. The story of the occupation is told in the first two chapters of Judges, which is probably the oldest book in the Bible. The phrase "after the death of Joshua" in the first verse of Judges, is a misleading editorial addition, intended by the compilers to explain the supposed relation of the book to Joshua, the volume which precedes it in our present arrangement. These chapters show the desperate nature of the struggle which gave to Israel even a partial and precarious hold upon the land. There was little united action. The tribes did as they could, Judah in the south, the two clans of Joseph in the central section, and the rest wherever they could win possessions. Generations were required to complete the process. But at last, after struggles, successes and failures, conquest of the Canaanites in war and absorption by marriage, Israel became the ruling race.

Centuries later the story was told in more romantic ways. The Book of Joshua presents a very different and more ideal picture. In this record, Israel, perfect in organization and acting with unity under the leadership of Joshua, achieves the conquest of the land in a series of brilliant victories, covering only seven years, and attended by miracles of the most startling character. The two records, Judges and Joshua, describe the events of the same period. Their striking difference is the result of the distances of their respective writers from the actual events. Later Jewish compilers attempted to make them successive rather than parallel accounts, by the editorial addition of Jud. 1:1, already noticed.

THE JUDGES.

The length of time elapsing after Israel secured a foothold in Canaan and before the beginnings of ordered government must have been more than a century. The story of these stormy years is presented in the chapters of Judges that follow the account of the first occupation. It is a record of tribal struggles, in which there was

little unity of action, and the different clans defended themselves and pushed their interests against their Canaanite neighbors as best they could (Jud. 3-16).

From time to time some leader of note was developed by the perils into which his immediate district fell. These local champions were later called judges. But their functions were rather those of chieftains than magistrates. They did not come in any succession, but arose at different times, in the various tribes. Two or more of them may have been active at the same time, and there may have been considerable intervals in which no one of them was in service. Among them the best remembered were Othniel of Judah, Deborah and Barak of Issachar, Gideon of Manasseh, Jephthah of Gilead and Samson of Dan. The times were rough and brutal. Such incidents as the half-humorous story of the Danites searching for a new home and robbing the shrine of the farmer Micah on the way, or the grim account of the feud which nearly exterminated the tribe of Benjamin, help the student to gain some impression of an age when "there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 17-21). There was no prophet of Jehovah to follow the work of Moses. The Judges were devoted to the national God, and in some instances were men of a certain rough religious feeling. But even Gideon fashioned an image for worship, and Jephthah pledged himself to human sacrifice if he should be successful in war, while no stretch of the imagination can find in Samson the elements of moral leadership.

THE RECORD OF SAMUEL.

The story of the life of the second great prophet of Israel is found in a work that bears his name. The four books of Samuel-Kings constitute one continuous prophetic document. It was broken up into books, chapters and verses merely for convenience of study and reference. The First Book of Samuel tells the story of the prophet Samuel's life as a moral leader of Israel.

The book bears his name not as its writer but its hero; his character and influence are its chief features.

It is evident that the writer made use of older documents. This is shown by duplicate accounts of the same events, and by differences of incident or view-point only to be explained by the employment of different records. There seem to be two series of narratives employed in the compilation of the book, one concerned with the character of Samuel, and the other with that of Saul. The book as we have it gives but a meagre account of the events of Samuel's life, but it selects such as have religious value, the purpose being to instruct the people regarding the dangers of perversion from the good will of Jehovah, and the rewards of national faithfulness.

THE SANCTUARY AT SHILOH.

At the period of the birth of Samuel, which was probably about 1100 B. C., the nation had no capital and no central sanctuary. But there were many shrines which were hallowed by the people of their respective communities, and were places of resort at the feast times. The tribe of Ephraim was the strongest in the nation, and within its borders, at the town of Shiloh, there was a sanctuary which was, at least by the people of that territory, held in great veneration. There the ark was kept, the sacred chest, consecrated to Jehovah and believed to be the visible symbol of his presence. The priest who ministered at this shrine was Eli, a worthy and venerable Levite. But his sons degraded their positions as priests by conduct which made the sanctuary a scene of extortion and licentiousness (1 Sam. 1:3, 9, 21, 24, 25; 2:12-17).

The sanctuary itself was a very simple structure, containing the ark, beside which an attendant slept as guard at night. A lamp was kept burning through the night. By day the people came freely to present their offerings, or to consult the old priest, who sat upon a seat by the door of the building. The sacrifices consisted of proper

or "clean" beasts, which were delivered by the worshiper to the attendants, and by them were killed. The blood was poured out at the base of the altar, on which the fat was burned, and the appropriate parts of the flesh were boiled in kettles to be eaten by the worshiper and his family. Nor did they forget the priest, who was invited to eat with them, or was given a portion of the food as his reward. This ritual represented the joyous eating of a holy meal before Jehovah, and was an act by which he was believed to be both honored and pleased.

THE YOUTH OF SAMUEL.

In the town of Ramah, a short distance southwest of Bethel, and a dozen miles south of Shiloh, lived a man of Ephraim, named Elkanah. He had two wives, for polygamy was common in that age. But one of these wives, Hannah, was childless and therefore unhappy, for no greater misfortune could overtake a Hebrew woman. The period of the annual pilgrimage to the sanctuary at Shiloh was the most painful season of the year to her, and in the distress of one of these visits she importuned God for a son, promising to devote him for life to the service of the holy place. Her prayer was heard, and she became the mother of the boy whom she named Samuel, because, to use the writer's etymology, she had been "heard of God." As soon as he was old enough she took him to Shiloh, and he remained there with the priests at the shrine. The psalm ascribed to Hannah as the expression of her joy is full of national sentiment and gratitude (I Sam. 1-4).

Meantime the conduct of the sons of Eli was becoming a public scandal, and the inability of their father to curb them was not believed to absolve him from responsibility. Indeed he was warned by one, who like himself was a priest or prophet, perhaps connected with another sanctuary, that if matters continued in their evil course, the end of their priestly service was at hand, and the doom of Shiloh sealed.

Chapter 3, the special theme of the present study, pictures the boy Samuel growing up in blameless youth, caring for the furniture of the sanctuary, and preparing silently and unconsciously for the work ahead. His awakening to the consciousness of a holy work is beautifully described as the call of God to him in the silence of the night, which he at first took for a summons from the aged priest. From that day forth Samuel perceived the impending danger to the nation and the family of Eli, and his own future ministry. It was too late to save the unfaithful ministers of the shrine. Their doom was fixed in the public scorn felt for them, even though they continued for a brief time their career at Shiloh.

When, soon after, the ark was lost to the Philistines in the disastrous battle of Aphek, into which with superstitious hope the priests carried it, the nation saw in the destruction of Shiloh, the death of the priestly family and the capture of the sacred chest, the mark of the divine displeasure at the irregularities connected with the religious services. Henceforth the confidence of the nation was in Samuel. He was the hope of his people in a time of distress. He was destined to become one of its great moral leaders.

VI.

SAMUEL, JUDGE AND PROPHET

Text for Special Study, I Samuel 15.

PHILISTINE OPPRESSION.

THE entire history of Israel might be written in terms of the influence of foreign nations upon the land and its people. At the first Egypt was the master, not only in the Nile valley, but also in Palestine; for at the time of the exodus the great empire of the south held sway over the whole of the Syrian coast-land. Later came the Philistine period, extending from the days of the judges until the kingdom of David became strong enough to put an end to their aggressions. Then followed successively the Syrian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Late Syrian, and Roman dominations, reaching to the very close of the Jewish state in 70 A. D. There was hardly a time, from the beginning of the Hebrew nation to the Roman conquest of Jerusalem, when Palestine was not subject to or fighting against one or another of its strong neighbors.

Of all these invaders none were more rapacious and dreaded than the Philistines. These non-Semitic people apparently settled on the southwest coast of Canaan about the time the Hebrews were gaining possession of the central mountain range. While the Hebrews scattered themselves over the entire district east and west of the Jordan, subduing or absorbing the more civilized but less hardy Canaanites, the Philistines established themselves in their five strong cities on the plain, Gath, Askalon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gaza. From this region

they pushed out into the higher plateau or shephelah, as they grew in strength, and later still they were able to control even the central range, to the almost complete discomfiture of the Hebrews. In the days of Samson there were raids back and forth across the border, the tribe of Dan suffering most because of its nearness to the Philistine cities. In the days of Eli the disastrous battle of Aphek was fought between the Hebrews and their foes, resulting in the total defeat of the former, the loss of the ark, the death of the priests, and the probable sack and destruction of Shiloh itself. Not for many years did Israel recover from this blow (1 Sam. 4-7).

As a result of Samuel's efforts, however, the nation was awakened to a new sense of its power. The scattered clans were given a consciousness of unity, and were able at last, when attacked at Mizpah, to make a successful stand, which resulted in the victory of Ebenezer (1 Sam. 7:5-12). But in spite of the confident assertion of the writer of this narrative that the Philistines were subdued, and made no more incursions into Hebrew territory, but rather delivered back the captured places held by them (1 Sam. 7:13, 14), it is apparent from the entire account that they were in virtual control of the land, raiding it at will, and subjecting the people to constant terror and outrage.

By untiring efforts Samuel put sufficient spirit into the hearts of his countrymen to give them hope of greater unity and power of resistance to these oppressions. And presently as the climax of his work he brought them to feel the need of a chieftain who could lead them in effective campaigns against their foes. The choice of Saul was an experiment to this end. It failed because the people had not yet learned sufficiently the value of united action, and because Saul, in spite of great personal courage and patriotism, did not possess the qualities requisite for leadership in so critical a time. His attempt at kingship was only partially successful,

and his forces were overwhelmed at last by the Philistines in the battle of Mt. Gilboa.

David, who soon after assumed the leadership of the clans of Judah, and later won the entire nation to his standard, was far more successful. He effectively checked the Philistine advances, doubtless making use of his knowledge of their tactics and strategy learned when a mercenary in their employ. In more than one pitched battle he routed them, and broke their power so completely that they were never more than a second-rate military force afterward. Later still he employed a company of Philistines as his paid bodyguard (2 Sam. 15:18, where "Cherethites—Pelethites" is probably to be rendered "Cretans—Philistines"), and at least one of his trusted captains was a man of Gath (2 Sam. 15:19; 18:2).

SAMUEL'S CIRCUITS

The youth Samuel, who had grown up in Shiloh at the sanctuary where Eli and his unworthy sons ministered, had come to be trusted even before the ill-fated battle of Aphek (1 Sam. 3:19-4:1). It is probable that Shiloh was ravaged and the sanctuary destroyed, at that time (cf. Jer. 7:12-14; 26:6-9; Ps. 78:60, 61). Samuel seems to have gone back to Ramah, his birth-place, and that town became his residence henceforth (1 Sam. 7:17; 19:18). The story of his service for Israel as judge, prophet and monitor during the next twenty years is told in three verses of the First Book of Samuel (7:2-4). There is no instance in the Bible of a notable public service extending through so many years described in such brief and telling words.

All this time the ark was in a mountain village of Judah, whither it had been taken on its return from the Philistine country (7:1, 2). There was no sanctuary that held the regard of the people as Shiloh had possessed it, though there were many local shrines. In this chaotic state of affairs Samuel undertook the task of

bringing the different groups of Israelites into closer touch with each other and greater loyalty to their common God. He did not attempt the creation of a central sanctuary, although by force of his growing influence his own town of Ramah came to occupy a notable place in the regard of the people (1 Sam. 8:4; 19:18).

Rather he went about to the important places in the hill region of central Palestine, and in each tarried for a time and held services in the name of Jehovah, the national God. He seems to have chosen towns like Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah, which were already reputed as holy places from ancient days, and were convenient of access to the people of the neighboring districts (1 Sam. 7:16). These places, and probably others, he visited annually. His work at such centers was a combination of what we should probably call a term of court and a revival meeting.

If a description of the essential elements of one of these visits is desired, it may be found in the account of Samuel's journey to Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16). To be sure, that narrative professes to report the story of a particular event, the selection of David as king. But the essential features were probably drawn from his customary procedure in the various towns included in his yearly circuits. The people were summoned to a sacrifice. This was not merely the slaying of an animal and the burning of its flesh upon an altar. Rather it was a joyful assembly of all the people of the region, including all the children, and the celebration of a sacrificial feast as the central feature of a gathering that probably lasted some days. Of such occasions Samuel took advantage to preach the message of God to the nation, its essential unity, its high destiny, the lives and hopes of the patriarchs, the work of Moses, the providences of Jehovah in the exodus, the possession of Canaan and the measure of success they had attained in resisting their enemies, the Philistines.

Such a moment was strategic for insistence upon the

need of obedience to Jehovah, the abandonment of all images, the Baals and Astartes that the people were often tempted to use in worship, and their faithful devotion to their God and the principles of his religion. It is not to be understood that this description in 1 Sam. 7:2-4 refers to any one episode of Samuel's long and faithful service. Rather is it the statement of the message he was accustomed to preach everywhere and on all occasions. It must have included not only injunctions regarding religious duties, but as well those which related to daily life and the obligations of the members of the different groups to each other. The effect of such constant activity on the part of the prophet was felt throughout the clans, at least in the central part of the nation. Whether the remoter districts were reached by his work to any extent we do not know. But that twenty years of quiet ministry, even in the midst of Philistine oppression, gave the people a vision of their ability to attain the status of a nation, and with the help of their God to make a successful stand against their hated foes. The people were drawn together after Jehovah (7:2, margin), and were ready for greater things.

THE CHOICE OF SAUL AS KING.

The results of Samuel's work came to their best expression in the popular demand for a king. Twenty years before, at the time the prophet began his labors, it would have been impossible to conceive sufficient unity of action to warrant the choice of a common leader. Up to that time the motto of the Book of Judges described the situation, "There was no king in Israel in those days, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1 21:25). Now, however, all was changed. The clans had been made aware of a common danger and opportunity. The inward revival of national feeling needed to take form in action. Samuel was not a warrior. His sons, whom he had called to his assistance as judges, were not of his type, but took advantage of

their position to extort bribes. The urgent need of the situation was a king, who could be both ruler and warrior (1 Sam. 8-11).

What was Samuel's attitude toward this new phase of public opinion? Two contrasted answers are given in our sources.

I. The early Judean narrative of Saul's life, which appears in 1 Sam. 9:1-10:16, 11:1-15, regards the choice of a king as the legitimate and desirable sequel of Samuel's great work. In this account Saul, a young and promising Benjaminite, on a journey in search of the strayed asses of his father (or uncle) goes to Ramah to consult the seer, and is informed by Samuel that he has been chosen to lead the tribes of Israel. Unable to credit so surprising an announcement, he is confronted with certain signs on his way home, such as his unexpected and wholly unaccountable subjection to the spell of the wild "prophesyings" of wandering groups of prophets. Later, when an emergency rises in connection with the siege of Jabesh-gilead, a Hebrew town east of the Jordan, Saul calls together the clans of Israel in his own name and that of Samuel, and relieves the threatened place; whereupon he is approved as king by the nation. In this entire narrative the attitude of Samuel is that of one who approved most heartily the selection of a king, and regarded it as the fitting consummation of his own labors.

II. The later and northern record of Samuel's career, as given in 1 Sam. 8:1-22, 10:17-27, 12:1-25, takes a very different view of the matter. It regards the popular demand for a king as unjustified, disloyal alike to Samuel and to God, and fraught with peril to the nation. In it the people make their request to the prophet, who is surprised and pained that they should forget his own services in their behalf. However, he is bidden to accede to their wishes, but not without warning them of the danger of the step they are taking. Then at a national assembly at Mizpah, to which he has summoned

them, Saul is chosen by lot, and soon after Samuel delivers his farewell address.

These two narratives present quite different interpretations of the important step now taken in the choice of a king, and of Samuel's attitude toward it. In one, emphasis is laid upon the growth of the people and the need presented by the new condition. In the other the writer is concerned to witness against the sin of Israel's love of novelty in its government, and its wish to be like the neighboring peoples. Between the two accounts it is impossible and unnecessary to decide. Their variation is the best proof of the substantial accuracy of the statements they both present regarding the conditions of the age.

THE REIGN OF SAUL.

The records of Saul's reign are very scanty (1 Sam. 13-31). Almost at once it became evident that he was unwilling to receive advice from Samuel. The reasons given for his rejection by Jehovah and the prophet, viz., his haste in not waiting for Samuel (13:1-15) and his failure to render complete obedience in the extermination of Amalek (15:1-35), do not seem convincing, and the sympathy of the reader is rather with Saul than otherwise. But these were no doubt merely examples of many acts of self-will and insubordination which the prophet could not condone, in spite of his real affection for the man. To Samuel the decisions at which he arrived through prayer and earnest meditation upon the nation's life were invested with the full sanction of divine authority. He did not hesitate to announce the will of God as thus made known to him, and to hold king and people responsible for instant obedience.

It is in this light that the narrative of our special study, 1 Sam. 15, is to be understood. On the journey through the desert the Amalekites threw themselves against Israel in deadly conflict, and were only vanquished with the greatest difficulty. Many of their tribes-

men dwelt on the southern frontier of Judah, and Samuel, though generations had passed, deemed it the sacred duty of Israel to wipe out the old enmity in blood. In so doing he felt himself to be fulfilling implicitly the divine command. It is no part of the duty of the modern student to attempt to justify that command. It would seem impossible to square it with the character of God as that character is revealed in other parts of the Scriptures, and especially in the New Testament. Rather is it the duty of the readers of the narrative to comprehend the point of view and the age of Samuel, between whom and the ampler interpretation of God as given by Jesus so many centuries of progress lie. Saul was nothing loath to execute the prophet's fierce will on Amalek, but he could not share that fiery enthusiasm which demanded that neither a shred of the spoil, nor the Amalekite chief, should be spared. But Samuel's rebuke gave occasion for one of the finest prophetic utterances of the Old Testament. Saul claimed that the plunder was for sacrifice. "Hath the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" asked Samuel in high indignation. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." That saying was treasured by the prophets of later days.

Saul's kingdom at best was hardly more than the small territory of his tribe, his warriors were his own tribesmen, his capital the town of Gibeah, and his palace his own house. In war he showed himself at his best, winning success on occasion against the Philistines and his neighbors, Moab and Ammon, on the east and north. But his successes were more than matched by his failures, and at last, in spite of his own bravery, the noble courage of Jonathan, the loyalty of the little army, and the hopes and prayers of Israel, he was overwhelmed and slain by the Philistines at Mt. Gilboa. His reign had lasted only a few years. A stronger hand than his was needed to guide the affairs of Israel. Was it true that

in his last hours he tried to call up the spirit of the great prophet to counsel him in his extremity (1 Sam. 29)? In any event, he realized too late that Samuel was the real power in Israel, and that in losing him he had lost all.

THE CHARACTER OF SAMUEL.

The prophet whose career we are studying was the most notable figure in the life of the nation from the times of Moses to those of David. His ministry constitutes the bridge across which Israel passed from the anarchical and chaotic times of the judges to the beginnings of orderly and constitutional government under David. Samuel was the representative of his age, strong in his convictions of national duty, fierce in his hatreds, implacable in his resentments, but loyal in every fibre to what he understood to be the will of God.

It was one of the virtues of his nature that he did not despise the illiterate, fanatical "prophets" who went about in bands, telling fortunes and declaring the rude shibboleths of the national religion. He drew them to himself, and made them his instruments in the dispersion of his message in the wider region of Israel. It was not strange that at his death the nation mourned, as if left fatherless. He had done a mighty work. And to the close of the history of Israel there appeared no more devoted, untiring and impressive teacher than Samuel, the Prophet of Ramah.

VII.

DAVID AND NATHAN

Text for Special Study, 2 Samuel 12:1-15.

DAVID'S EARLY YEARS.

THE narrative of David's life is contained in the two Books of Samuel, beginning with the second half of the first of these two works. The body of the account is taken from an early Judean source dealing with the life and work of David, who was the most popular of the nation's heroes during its early history. Other and later traditions are mingled with this basic narrative and form somewhat striking contrasts in the presentation of the story.

For example, there are two entirely different accounts of David's first arrival at the court of Saul. In one of these accounts (1 Sam. 16:15-17:11; 17:32-54), we are told that Saul was afflicted with melancholia and that his servants recommended to him a young man of Judah, David, the son of Jesse, who was a youth of distinction and experience, particularly skilled as a musician. He was taken to Gibeah, and became Saul's minstrel and armor-bearer. At a later time when a Philistine champion, named Goliath, defied the army of Israel, he went forth single-handed and slew him, obtaining thereby the plaudits of the people and the right to become the king's son-in-law.

The other narrative (17:12-31, 55-58; 18:1-5) recounts the visit of David, the shepherd youth of Bethlehem, to the camp of Saul to bring provisions for his three older brothers. There he heard the challenge of the Philistine

and asked the privilege of going forth to meet him. Neither Saul nor any of the leaders knew him, but as soon as the fight was over Jonathan became his fast friend, and David was taken into Saul's official household. These two narratives are placed side by side by the compilers of the account, and therefore must have had a value quite irrespective of their different statements of the events.

David rose rapidly in public esteem as an officer of the army. In spite of Saul's growing jealousy David won the dangerous distinction of becoming the king's son-in-law, although in so doing he was subjected to imminent peril. Finally, it became obvious that he could not remain near Saul without constant fear of assassination. He therefore fled, perhaps, as the right placing of the narratives would seem to imply, on his wedding night. He made his way first to the sanctuary at Nob, where he obtained by fraudulent representation food and a weapon (1 Sam. 18-21).

The two narratives that represent him as taking refuge with Samuel at Ramah and at the court of the Philistines seem to be later accounts, difficult to adjust to the actual facts. It is easy to see that the first of these, like the narrative of David's anointing by Samuel at Bethlehem, is surrounded with difficulties that lead to serious questions regarding its historicity. No doubt the motive for both was the strong desire of David's biographers to connect him and his dynasty with the authority of Samuel's strong leadership in the nation.

David is next heard of as a free-booter and refugee in Judah, where he gathered about himself a band that presently numbered six hundred men. The life which he led was that of a border outlaw who subsisted by blackmail upon the farmers of the region. Still later, even this precarious life became impossible, and he offered his services and those of his band to Achish, the king of Gath, who placed him in the frontier town of Ziklag. From this place David made raids into the

neighboring territories to the south. In a most opportune manner he was able to escape from the necessity of joining the Philistine forces which overthrew King Saul at Mt. Gilboa, and was thus enabled to preserve his place in the regard of the Hebrews (1 Sam. 22-31).

DAVID THE KING.

The kingdom of Saul was so completely obliterated by the fatal issue of the battle of Mt. Gilboa, in which the king and his three sons perished, that no effort was made to secure his successor upon the throne of Israel for at least five years. Meantime the sheikhs of the tribe of Judah waited upon David at his town of Ziklag and invited him to become their king. He accepted their offer and established his capital at Hebron, twenty miles south of Jerusalem. There he reigned for a period of six years and a half (2 Sam. 1-4).

The effort to reorganize Saul's shattered kingdom, when Ish-baal, or Ish-bosheth, his son, was crowned at Mahanaim, east of the Jordan, proved only a brief and impossible adventure. Abner and other distinguished northern leaders deserted their master and presented to David overtures to become the king of the north as well as the south. He accepted the proffer and immediately began the organization of that kingdom which lasted in its integrity for nearly a century, and persisted, at least in the south, until Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B. C., by the Babylonians.

His first enterprise was the gaining of a worthy capital. Jerusalem, at that time a Jebusite stronghold, had the advantages of an almost impregnable situation, a neutral position between the mutually suspicious tribes of the north and south, and the opportunity for conquest which should add an actually new site to the territories of Israel. Accordingly, David attacked and captured this fortress and made it henceforth his royal city. He built up its walls, erected a palace for himself, and a fortress, and presently the city that began as the mere Jebusite

camp on the southern edge of Mt. Zion, crept back up along the height until in Solomon's day it reached almost to the summit of the mountain (2 Sam. 5).

From this center David went forth in a series of campaigns that speedily reduced his neighbors, the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites and other peoples, to the position of tribute-paying vassals. His kingdom was organized on a plan quite beyond the range of any former attempt at centralized authority in Israel. The army became a formidable organization, with its six hundred picked warriors as a nucleus, quartered about the palace of the king himself. In his later years the calm of his life was disturbed by serious revolts, the one headed by his son, Absalom, being the most formidable. But David's power was too strong to be prematurely broken, and he came to the close of his career the honored head of a strong and growing state (2 Sam. 6-24).

NATHAN THE PROPHET.

The most distinguished figure in the court of David, after the king himself, was Nathan the prophet. Indeed David esteemed Nathan as his own superior, and he is to be regarded as the next successor of Samuel in the line of prophet-statesmen. He was David's chief adviser. He first appears in connection with the king's wise and generous plan to build a temple for the shelter of the ark. The king felt that his capital needed this building to complete it. When the idea was first submitted to Nathan he seems to have approved it. Later on, however, he returned to advise David to postpone his project till a more favorable time.

The ground on which this advice was given was that David was not the right person to build a temple, since he had been a man of war. But the real motive lay further back. The prophet, like all the men of his order, believed that any effort to centralize and enrich the liturgical side of Israel's religion was certain to be made at the expense of its vitality. He did not forbid the en-

terprise, but with a certain disquietude of spirit he advised its postponement until it should seem that the appropriate time had come. Meanwhile, he promised that David's house, the dynasty of which he was the head, would be built by Jehovah, a flattering recognition of the generous nature of the proposal the king had made. This message of the prophet to David was felt to be the expression of the will of God, and was consistent with the policy of the prophets throughout the earlier history.

It was, however, in his personal relation with David as religious monitor that Nathan reached his highest importance. On the occasion when David seized the wife of one of his officers and took her into his own harem, the prophet fearlessly denounced his conduct as unkingly and unjust, the robbing of a poor and faithful servant to gratify his own caprice. The spirit of humility in which the king received the prophet's rebuke, and the parable which formed the illustration employed, constitute one of the most impressive incidents in the history of early moral leadership (2 Sam. 12).

It will be noticed that the aspect of the event which appealed to Nathan and to the prophetic chroniclers of the time, was not so much the personal immorality of the act as its social injustice. The former quality had yet to emerge to prominence in the preaching of the prophets. It was enough that they should stand at this period for justice in the dealings of a king with his subjects. Nathan again appears in connection with the crowning of Solomon (1 Kings 1), which suggests that the prophet was probably the instructor of Solomon's youth.

THE CHARACTER OF DAVID.

It is difficult to do justice to so many-sided a nature as that of this king. It is clear that he had elements of great strength and popularity. He was brave, pleasing in person, genial, enthusiastic and confident. At the same time he had an abundance of those very faults which by orientals are regarded not only with toleration but even

with approval. He was ambitious, often selfish, unhesitating in his use of fraud and deception when they advanced his interests. He was cruel in war and crafty in diplomacy.

In other words he was a true child of his age, touched with the sense of a providential opportunity and genuine devotion to his people and his God. The crimes he committed were those easily tolerated in a king. The astonishment of the student is excited not by the fact that he fell into these errors, but that he was so easily persuaded of the wrongs he had wrought and so promptly brought to confession and self-reproach. There is nothing finer in religious history than his self-abasement before Nathan. Nor is there anything more inspiring than his refusal to take advantage of the companionship of the ark when he fled from Jerusalem before the advancing forces of Absalom. His cry of anguish at the death of his handsome but misguided son is convincing as to his father love. And the constant efforts he made in behalf of the religion of Israel, not merely on the formal and ceremonial side, but on that of moral uplift and social justice, are the proofs of his greatness.

He is not to be judged by the standards of our age, but of his own. We have only to contrast his character with that of contemporary monarchs in the neighboring nations to see how he towers above them all. If it were possible to point out what psalms could be associated with his name, we should have a further element in his favor. All that we can say with confidence is that it was the belief of later ages that David had composed hymns of a religious character, and thus his name was in some manner associated with a collection of prayers and praises which later became the great hymn book of the Jewish race.

OTHER PROPHETS.

Through all of this period there are figures that move dimly in the background of the story, and claim the right

to be called men of God. Just as in the days of Samuel we are told of an unknown prophet who warned Eli of his impending fate (1 Sam. 2:27), so in the later times of which we are studying there were holy men who wrought in behalf of righteousness under the shadow of great leaders like Nathan and David. Such a man was Gad the seer or prophet, who is mentioned in connection with the disaster that fell upon David at the time of the census (2 Sam. 24:11); and the Chronicler names him as the writer of an account of his master's reign (1 Chron. 29:29). That other men of the same class were active in the work of religion in the reign of David seems probable.

VIII.

AHIJAH OF SHILOH

Text for Special Study, 1 Kings 11:26-12:15.

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON.

WHEN David died it was not strange that there should have been some misgiving on the part of the loyal supporters of the throne, for Solomon was a youth, and there were elements of danger both at home and abroad. But the young king dealt with the situation so firmly that his power was soon recognized by all. Adonijah, his designing brother, Joab, the unscrupulous captain in David's reign, and Shemei, the rebel, were put to death, while Abiathar, the priest, was removed to make room for the more friendly Zadok.

The royal marriage contracted by Solomon with the daughter of the reigning Pharaoh of Egypt must have given the young king unusual prestige. Not given to war, like his father, he turned his attention to building almost at once. He constructed the palace, the chief feature of which was the "House of the Forest of Lebanon," so-called from its pillars and cedar work. This took thirteen years. Then he built the Harem, which was known as "The House of the Daughter of Pharaoh," after the chief wife. The temple took seven years for its completion. Then there were such additional enterprises as the fort, Millo, the enlargement of the walls, and the store and garrison cities built in various parts of the kingdom.

In order to carry out these plans, Solomon entered into a contract with his father's friend, Hiram of Tyre,

to furnish cedar and stone in return for supplies of wheat and oil. He also established a sea trade with India, sending out his ships from the port of Elath on the Gulf of Akaba. By means of this traffic, and the importation of horses and chariots in the trade with Egypt, Syria and the Hittites, Solomon acquired large private wealth (1 Kings 2:12-11:43).

But in spite of his fame and popularity, there were features of his rule which awakened resentment. The change from the simple life of the age of Samuel and David was too rapid and violent. In the organization of his kingdom for administrative purposes the old tribal boundaries were disregarded and a new system of royal districts took their place. But most distasteful of all was the corvée, or levy of workers required by the king for his extensive building operations, and the taxes needed in the maintenance of the harem and court which Solomon gathered about him. Even if the biblical numbers are greatly exaggerated (700 wives and 300 concubines) the public burden of such an establishment must have been very great. Of course these women had political significance. Many of them represented foreign alliances cemented by marriage. This form of polygamy has always been an important item in the diplomacy of oriental courts.

On the other hand there was much in the spectacular character of Solomon's rule to please an impressionable people like the Hebrews. Jerusalem became a beautiful city. The pageant of the court and the army was pleasing to a splendor-loving race. The achievements of the king in trade, organization and the enrichment of his kingdom, filled the people with pride. The visits of other rulers, like the Queen of Sheba, not only added to the brilliancy of life at the capital, but increased the reputation of Solomon. Even the adversaries who threatened to give him trouble—men like Hadad of Edom, Rezon

of Zobah and Jeroboam of Ephraim, were compelled to take refuge under the protection of Egypt.

THE CHARACTER OF SOLOMON.

The impression made by the casual reading of the records of Solomon's life is that he made a good beginning, but under the influence of the court and harem he declined toward the close and became a despot and a voluptuary. Probably these impressions are due to the disappointment of the prophets at the results of Solomon's work.

The truth seems to be rather that he was a man of totally different character from his father David. He was far abler and shrewder in taking advantage of the opportunities of government for his own profit. To a naturally alert mind which made him observant of the phenomena of nature, he added the advantage of all the educational discipline the times afforded, perhaps under the instruction of Nathan, so that he bore the reputation of being the wisest man of his age. But his wisdom was of the nature of intellectual cleverness and political sagacity rather than breadth of vision and concern for the highest good.

As to his interest in religion, it was rather the recognition of its value as a necessary and picturesque feature of his kingdom than a personal relation with God, such as David had sought. In spite of the public and rather formal expressions of Solomon's piety, the impression made by the records is that he was not a deeply religious man in any sense, but rather a secularist, who desired to make religion as spectacular as possible, and therefore use it in the adornment of his capital and the enrichment of the external side of public life. He was a worshiper of Jehovah, the God of his father. But it was a part of his deliberate policy to enrich his city with the shrines of other gods, such as his many wives adored. In this conduct he sought to gain all the advantage which the presence of foreigners and the

encouragement of other forms of worship could bring to his country.

Even the building of the temple, to which David had looked forward with longing, was to Solomon hardly more than the completion of his plan for the architectural adornment of Jerusalem, and the addition of an elaborate scheme of religious ceremonies to the program of his court.

THE WORK OF THE PROPHETS.

Meantime the estate of the men of prophetic character was increasingly difficult. In the reign of David they had been honored and trusted. Nathan ranked higher even than the king, at least in David's regard. But in Solomon's reign all this was changed. Like Louis XIV, the king was the state. He assumed the position of a true oriental despot. The priests, the public ministers of religion, whose elaborate vestments made them a picturesque feature of the court, were honored. But the prophets were given scant regard, and they felt that with their relegation to obscurity the dangers to the true religion were greatly increased.

The apprehension felt by Nathan in connection with David's desire to build a temple was more than justified by events. The priests were attracted to Jerusalem by the protection and profit afforded by the great central religious establishment, and the rural districts were left without care. The temple was not the only shrine, to be sure, for Solomon himself honored others. But it soon displaced all others in the public mind, and the prophets feared the results of such centralization. The entire drift of events was toward a strong, autocratic, secular state, like the neighboring nations. The despotism of the court was bad enough. The burdens of the people were sufficient cause for complaint. But still worse was the peril that threatened religion. Better far a simpler government and a genuine regard for the national faith, such as had prevailed in Samuel's day, than all this wealth and ceremonial.

The people of the orient are naturally patient. They bear heavy burdens with small complaint, particularly if they can enjoy the pageantry of royal shows. If they had been left to themselves they might have endured even heavier burdens than those imposed by Solomon. But the prophets felt that the time to act had come, before the load became too heavy and the monarchy too firmly established. They determined to curb the pride of the court, and failing in this, to fan public resentment into such a flame of revolt as would consume the fabric of absolutism. The death of Solomon afforded them the occasion they sought. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, a chief of levies of the tribe of Ephraim, was their instrument, and Ahijah of Shiloh was their leader.

AHIJAH AND JEROBOAM.

During the final years of Solomon, Jeroboam had attracted the king's attention as a man of ability. In making the extension of the walls of Jerusalem and the construction of the fort, Millo, Jeroboam was in charge of the workers of Ephraim and Manasseh. He seemed to the prophets the ablest man to entrust with their design, and accordingly Ahijah made his acquaintance and opened to him the plans of the group. In a long and earnest conference, perhaps only one of many, he made clear to him the opportunity offered, the basis of the prophetic dissatisfaction with the current tendency, and the promise of popular support as the result of the organizing work of the prophets. We are even told that Ahijah gave Jeroboam forcible illustration of the coming division of the kingdom by rending his own new mantle into twelve strips, of which he gave the young Ephraimite ten (1 Kings 11:26-12:33).

In spite of the secrecy which all concerned must have endeavored to maintain, the conspiracy was partly revealed, and Jeroboam had to save his life by flight to Egypt. But the work of preparation went on in his absence. The prophets did not intend to proceed to

extreme measures without giving Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, a chance to save his throne. But they probably knew enough of his disposition to forecast the result, and they did not desire to be unprepared for whatever might happen. The fact that they appeared so slightly in the matter, and allowed the entire movement to assume the character of a political revolt was not only natural, but an indication of their wisdom.

At Solomon's death Jeroboam was recalled and Rehoboam was summoned to a national assembly at Shechem, the ancient sanctuary in the north. There he was asked to submit his program or platform. Would he lighten the popular burdens, or follow the policy of his father? If he were willing to concede the popular demands, which the prophets had skillfully incited, there was hope for a return to the earlier simplicity of Israel's life. If not, then the decisive step must be taken.

The issue was made and Rehoboam submitted the popular demands, first to the older men, who knew the changes from the days of David, and advised concession; and then to the young men who had grown up with him in the luxurious atmosphere of Solomon's court. The latter advised no compromise with the conservatives, and the prince made the fatal choice. Instantly the cry of rebellion was raised, and Rehoboam was compelled to escape for his life to Jerusalem. The venerable overseer of the levies whom he sent to recall the people to allegiance to the house of David was stoned, and the breach was irreparable.

Jeroboam was crowned soon after, and became king of the ten northern tribes. The prophets had accomplished their purpose. From the point of view of national unity and political power they had wrought unspeakable folly. The nation never recovered from the shock of that division. Henceforth it was destined to be only a second or third-rate state. But from the point of view of religious concern the nation was saved. And the price was not too heavy, for Israel's contribution to history was

not political, but ethical and religious. Ahijah of Shiloh and his colleagues had done their work with courage and success.

ANOTHER PROPHETIC WORK.

That the prophets of the north and south acted in concert is shown by the opposition of Shemiah of Judah to the plan of Rehoboam to invade the realm of Jeroboam after the revolt (1 Kings 12:21-24). Later on, Ahijah voiced the bitter disappointment felt by the prophets at Jeroboam's refusal to follow their counsel. In fact the new king patterned his government as nearly as possible after that of Solomon. He set up shrines and bull-images of Jehovah at Bethel and Dan, he dislocated the calendar of the feasts, and inducted non-Levites into the places of the men who had withdrawn to the temple at Jerusalem.

When his son fell sick, Jeroboam sent his wife in disguise to Shiloh to secure from the prophet a verdict regarding his recovery. But the indignant Ahijah used the opportunity to recall the hopes which Jeroboam had blasted, and announced the tragedy which awaited him (1 Kings 14:1-18). Nothing further is known of Ahijah. Prophetic traditions are preserved in 1 Kings 13, and in 2 Chron. 9:29 mention is made of a writing of Nathan regarding Solomon, a prophetic work by Ahijah of Shiloh, and certain oracles of Iddo the Seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

IX.

ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.

Text for Special Study, 1 Kings 18.

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

DURING the sixty-two years from the death of Solomon (937 B. C.) to the beginning of the reign of Ahab (875 B. C.) six kings followed each other upon the throne of the Northern Kingdom. In fact, the entire period of two hundred and fifteen years during which the Kingdom of Israel lasted (937-721 B. C.) was marked by rapid changes of rulers and even of dynasties. While the family of David held the power in Jerusalem, almost without interruption, no less than five different families had representatives among the rulers of the north.

The chronology of these reigns is not capable of precise statement. The biblical writers gave but little attention to matters of time. The years of a king in one of the two Hebrew states are usually recorded in terms of the reign of his contemporary across the border. By comparison of events in Palestine with those of the great empires of Assyria and Babylonia, where the work of the historian was a matter of greater moment, it is possible to reach a tentative chronology of Israel's affairs. But students should not be perplexed if they discover some disagreements among authorities on this point. Any recent computation of dates based on the great chronological systems of the older Semitic nations is sufficiently trustworthy for practical purposes.

Jeroboam, whom the prophets aided to seize the lead-

ership of the northern tribes, ruled successfully for more than twenty years. He fortified the old town of Shechem as his capital, and built Penuel, east of the Jordan. During most of his reign he was at war with Rehoboam, his Judean neighbor, and he suffered the loss of some of his towns, when Shishak (or Sheshonk) of Egypt invaded Palestine and sacked Jerusalem in 932 B. C. (1 Kings 15:25-16:34).

The prophets never forgave him for the unfriendliness which he displayed toward them and their policy when once he had obtained power. The worst reproach they could cast upon Nadab his son who followed him with a weak reign of two years, was that he walked in the way of his father, "and in his sin wherewith he caused Israel to sin" (1 Kings 15:25, 26).

Relations with the Philistines had never been friendly, and it was at the siege of Gibbethon, a Philistine city, that Baasha of Issachar murdered his master Nadab, and placed himself upon the throne. He exterminated all the family of Jeroboam, according to the savage custom of the time, and for nearly a quarter of a century ruled in his city, Tirzah, whither the government was removed from Shechem.

Color is lent to the supposition that the prophets favored the course of Baasha against the rule of the house of Jeroboam, by the fact that one of their number, Jehu, the son of Hanani, denounced him in language which implies disappointment at the curve his career had taken similar to that voiced by Ahijah at the conduct of Jeroboam (1 Kings 15:33-16:7). Baasha's reign saw the continuance of the war with Judah, over which Asa was now ruling.

Elah, son of Baasha, after a brief reign of two years, was assassinated during a drunken orgy in the house of the chief of his household officers, by Zimri, one of his captains. But the assassin only gained a week of rule, and was in turn overthrown by Omri, whom the army elevated to kingship. A brief civil war ensued

between Omri and another commander, Tibni. But the narrative proceeds with naive simplicity, "The people who were with Omri were more numerous than those that followed Tibni, so Tibni died and Omri reigned" (1 Kings 16:22).

With Omri, Israel began to attain importance. He purchased the splendid site of Samaria and removed thither his capital from the indefensible Shechem. He made alliance with Ethbaal of Sidon, cementing the compact by the marriage of his son Ahab to Jezebel, the daughter of his new ally. His name was known by the Assyrians, who for a generation after his death knew Palestine as "the land of Omri." After a reign of twelve years he left to his son a worthy inheritance. But his policy of friendliness with foreigners aroused against him the resentment of the prophets, who saw in him the embodiment of "the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin" (1 Kings 16:23-28).

JEHOVAH AND THE BAALS.

The great issue which was destined to arise soon in Israel was brought to a crisis in the reign of Ahab (1 Kings 16:29-33). The tendency among all the Semitic peoples, as indeed among most primitive nations, was to regard deity as resident in various sacred localities, stones, fountains, trees and the like. The local deity of any place was its "baal" or "lord." The worship of these provincial deities was attended with rites degrading to the moral nature, yet deeply seductive to a passionate and impulsive people like the Hebrews.

In Phoenicia this worship received state sanction, and Jezebel, the Sidonian princess, came to Samaria with all the zeal of a missionary, determined to make her religion the cultus of her new home. It was not so much the worship of a god Baal, as has often been supposed. It is a question whether there ever was such a god, save as the deities of the different sections of the country were the "baals" (baalim) or "lords" of their re-

spective domains. But in Israel it was the struggle between worship of Jehovah, the national God, and that of these nature gods, now so rapidly creeping in, which made memorable the days of Ahab. Of these two forms of religion, Elijah the prophet and Jezebel the queen, were the fitting representatives.

More than this, the prophet and the court represented two hostile policies in government. Ahab, though by inheritance a worshiper of the God of the nation, was anxious, even as Solomon had been, to take advantage of all the opportunities for trade which the friendship of neighboring states afforded him. To be friendly with foreigners and at the same time to be intolerant of their religions was to his mind a narrow and impossible policy. So he set up, even in his capital, shrines to the "baals," and planted the asherah or sacred grove, the scene of so much degrading conduct in the name of religion.

On the other hand, the prophets, and especially Elijah their leader, set their faces like flint against all intercourse between Israel and its neighbors. Elijah saw that the nation must first learn its own lesson of purity and loyalty to its God before it could be trusted to mingle with the peoples of the world. In seclusion alone was there safety. For this reason his religious and political convictions were quite the opposite of those of the king.

ELIJAH AND AHAB.

The first recorded appearance of Elijah was dramatic (1 Kings 17). His home seems to have been in a certain locality called Tishbe, probably in the northern part of the land. But for some time he had lived in Gilead, east of the Jordan. From the first mention of this remarkable man, much of the narrative of the Books of Kings is devoted to him and his helper and successor, Elisha. This portion of the account was probably taken from a record of the lives of these men of God, preserved in the prophetic communities. Perhaps that record told also of the earlier years of Elijah, but in our sources he

appears quite suddenly before King Ahab, announcing that for many days to come there would be no rain in the land. The idea that drought was a sign of the divine displeasure was common in that age.

Then the prophet withdrew to seclusion, first in one of the wadis of the Jordan, and later in a village of Phoenicia. The stories related of Elijah and Elisha are full of the wonder element, of which primitive people were fond. Miracle is interwoven with the most ordinary events of their lives. May this not have been the outgrowth of actual deeds of power such as the cure of the sick, wrought by them? Does the fact that no miracles are recorded of such earlier prophets as Samuel, Nathan and Ahijah, or the great prophets of later days, like Amos, Hosea and Jeremiah, have any bearing on the probability or otherwise that miracle was an element in the lives of these men? Considering the fact that all ancient peoples believed in miraculous powers as factors in the lives of their heroes, is there anything surprising in the narratives of providential and marvelous events in the life of Elijah? The real value of the record, however, lies not in these wonder-stories, but in the preaching of the religion of Jehovah, the inculcation of obedience to him, and the insistence upon conduct such as he could approve.

The worship of the baals was jeopardizing every virtue in the national life. The policy of the king was opening the door to the enervating influences of foreign luxury and immorality. Against these tendencies, Elijah and his fellow prophets set themselves like a wall of fire. In one regard Elijah was in error. He believed himself to be the sole survivor of the band of prophets. It seemed at first glance that Jezebel had exterminated the men of Jehovah (1 Kings 19:10, 14). But he learned later that many of them had escaped (1 Kings 18:4, 13), and was assured that the faithful in Israel were a great host (1 Kings 19:18).

He remained in seclusion many months, and then re-

turned and faced the king. The two men were striking contrasts. Their dress, surroundings, convictions and ideals were almost wholly in antagonism. There was no friendliness in their meeting. Each accused the other of being the chief disturber of Israel's peace.

THE CONTEST AT CARMEL.

The narrative of the latter half of chapter eighteen is a dramatic description of this great duel between the champions of the two religions. Does it describe an actual event which decided the matter, or is it the vivid and condensed picture of a contest waged by Elijah through years against the nature worship of the baals? (1 Kings 18.)

As the scene is described, the event took place at an ancient shrine somewhere on the ridge of Carmel, and the traveler is shown the spot where tradition has located it. With indignation Elijah demanded of the assembled people how long they proposed to limp, or hop, from one side to the other of the line that separated Jehovah from the false gods. With high confidence in his cause, he gave his antagonists the advantage, allowing them the full day for their effort. Then as their failure became more apparent, he pursued them with his rough humor, till frantic with rage and disappointment, and in hope still to gain the regard of the lord on whom they called, they resorted to all the fierce devices of a fanatical religion. But in vain.

In contrast with this overwhelming failure, Elijah's appeal was completely successful. The stupendous character of the miracle is in accord with the spirit of the entire narrative. Whatever may be thought of these features of the record, it is clear that the recital presents in thrilling form the story of the contest, long or short, which Elijah waged against the corrupt and demoralizing religion for which Jezebel stood sponsor. The verdict which the people voiced, "Jehovah is God," was the outcome of the struggle undertaken by this man of God to

guard the faith of his land from contamination. In a true sense Elijah was the restorer of the national religion.

ELIJAH AND JEZEBEL.

When Elijah ordered the prophets of the baals and the sacred groves put to death at the foot of the mountain, beside the Kishon, he did only what his fierce zeal for Jehovah prompted and approved. Then he demanded that the king make haste homeward, and after the long, sevenfold intercession for rain, he girded himself and ran like any commonest servant before the royal chariot to the gates of Jezreel.

The king was wholly friendly, and no resentment showed itself regarding the events of the day. He was content to accept the decision that had been approved by the people. But Jezebel was of another mind (1 Kings 19). Though she was not the only wife of Ahab (1 Kings 20: 3, 5, 7), she threw all the others into obscurity by her commanding character. In high wrath at the outcome of the contest, but most of all at the bloody death of her friends the prophets, she sent Elijah a threatening message, warning him that he had but a day to live.

In panic fear he fled for his life. Never was there a more complete eclipse of courage. All the fruits of victory he abandoned in dismay. He was paying the penalty of his fanatical violence, in the needless slaughter of the men who through the queen's hatred, were more powerful in death than in life. Not till the prophet had reached the very borders of the southern kingdom did he pause. And then once more he fled onward to the old sanctuary of Jehovah at Horeb.

There in the vast solitude of the Mount of God he learned the lesson that the God he served did not accomplish his purposes by forces of terror like whirlwind, earthquake and fire, but by the voice of instruction. And when he came back to take up again his task, he

was commissioned to choose better leaders for the people, that in this way rather than by violence, the will of God might prevail. For the victory of righteousness is never won in a single battle, but must come as the issue of many campaigns. And there must be no panic flight, nor any slackening of effort, for the battle is not ours alone, but God's, and the final victory is assured.

X.

ELIJAH, DEFENDER OF POPULAR RIGHTS.

Text for Special Study, 1 Kings 21.

THE CALL OF ELISHA.

WHEN Elijah returned from his long journey to the holy mount of Horeb, he had changed somewhat his plan of action, having learned that God's purposes are not promoted by the sword but by the voice. It was his purpose under the divine prompting to change the order of events in Israel by political as well as religious means. It was apparent that little could be hoped from the worldly and luxurious policy of Ahab and his family. It seemed natural, therefore, to believe that another king upon the throne would accomplish the work the prophet had in mind. Perhaps, also he knew enough of Syrian affairs to believe that another king in that land would be likely to afford Israel better opportunities for development than the present dynasty of Ben-hadad promised. It may be, of course, that our narrative merely anticipates the change of dynasties in the two kingdoms, and attributes that change to the plans of the prophet.

But one event of importance was accomplished on this return journey. At the town of Abel-meholah in the valley of the Jordan near Beth-shan, Elijah came upon a young man, Elisha, ploughing his field with oxen. Striding up to him in his enigmatical and commanding way, Elijah, without speaking a word to the young farmer, threw over him his mantle. The act was so impressive that Elisha instantly left his work and started

to follow the prophet, asking only time to bid his father and mother farewell before he entered upon Elijah's service. The prophet demanded of him instant obedience or none, much as Jesus did when he said to the scribe, "Follow me and let the dead bury their dead." Elisha understood something of the imperious nature of his new master, and as soon as he had called his neighbors together and made them a farewell feast, he took the road to Elijah's dwelling and remained with him from that day forth (1 Kings 19:15-21).

SYRIA AND ISRAEL.

Something of the hostile relations between Israel and Syria is revealed in the scattered fragments that have been preserved to us in the First Book of Kings. It is clear that the first concern of the writers was the story of the two prophets, Elijah and Elisha. All that relates to the political and military experience of the nation is of purely secondary moment.

From the days of Omri there had been rivalry between Samaria and Damascus. They were too close to each other and too strong not to be involved in more or less conflict. They were falling out continually over their boundary line. In 1 Kings 20 there is given the account of two expeditions made by Ben-hadad into the heart of Israel for the purpose of humbling his adversary, Ahab of Samaria. The latter was apparently in no condition to resist. The Syrians came with overwhelming numbers and penetrated to the very gates of the capital. So impossible seemed the task of defense that Ahab even yielded to the arrogant demands for an enormous indemnity, including not only silver and gold, but also the wives and children of the king. But when the Syrian king, in an excess of insolence, extended these demands to include the sack of Samaria, Ahab and his people took courage from the very depth of their humiliation, and refused the exorbitant and outrageous claim. Then in

a courageous attack during a drunken orgy in the camp of the Syrians, they gained a complete victory over their enemies, and Ben-hadad himself only escaped among the swift horsemen of his bodyguard.

The following year the Syrian expedition was duplicated. Ben-hadad came back, trusting in the word of his counselors that since Jehovah was a god of the hills, the Syrians might hope for victory if they met the Hebrews in the plain. The battle was joined at Aphek, east of the Sea of Galilee, and resulted in a second victory for Israel. So complete was the overthrow that Ben-hadad and his captains submitted themselves to Ahab as prisoners of war, trusting to his clemency. In this they were not mistaken, for Ahab concluded a treaty with his rival providing for free trade between the two countries.

The prophets were greatly exasperated at this unlooked-for clemency of Ahab toward his foes. They felt that he had thrown away a splendid opportunity to strike a complete and humbling blow at their great national adversary. But no doubt Ahab understood that Assyria was a foe more to be dreaded even than the Syrian forces immediately to the east. It was better that Israel and Damascus should maintain a friendly alliance for defense against the encroachments of their arrogant neighbor beyond the Euphrates, than that Israel should gratify its present love of victory at the expense of a weakening of the allied forces.

NABOTH OF JEZREEL.

The important feature of our present study is the scene between Ahab and Elijah, the outgrowth of the unjust treatment accorded Naboth, the farmer of Jezreel (1 Kings 21). The king wished to enlarge and improve his royal park in this summer capital. But Naboth did

not wish to sell his vineyard, even though the king was willing to offer him ample compensation. He loved his ancestral estate, and refused to part with it.

Ahab, knowing something of the temper of his people and the customs in Israel, deemed it fruitless to pursue the matter further. He knew of no law by which he could force Naboth to give up his field, and he fully understood the risks of outraging the customs long established. Like Frederick the Great, in his dealings with the farmer of Potsdam whose unsightly windmill he wished to buy and demolish, Ahab knew that he must submit to the higher law of custom in the land.

But Jezebel was of a different mind. She was the daughter of a priest of Sidon who had reached the throne by intrigue and assassination. She was a zealous supporter of the doctrine that the royal will is supreme. She probably understood less of the Hebrew reverence for custom than did Ahab. At any rate she insisted that she would take the matter into her own hands and secure the property for the king.

She did this by procuring the arrest of Naboth on false charges of impiety and disloyalty. Willing servants of hers pronounced against him a judgment of death, for which there was no true evidence. And in spite of what must have been the strong public feeling, the measure was carried through with a high hand and Naboth was put to death. Hearing this news, Ahab quieted his conscience and his fears, and went out to look over the field of Naboth, which by forced process of law had been forfeited to the crown.

But he had Elijah yet to reckon with. The prophet met him in the new portion of his grounds; and burning with indignation at the wrong which Ahab had approved, he denounced him and foretold the unhappy end of himself and his dynasty. He even went so far as to insist that Ahab's own blood should be shed on the spot where the judicial murder of the farmer had taken place.

In this scene Elijah represents the true prophetic spirit of protest against social injustice, and defense of popular rights. In this fact lay the true greatness of the man. His value as a prophet did not consist in any works of wonder credited to him, nor any mere predictions of what would happen in the future. These were but the incidents of his task of social reconstruction. He was a tribune of the people, jealous of their rights and insistent that no kingly authority should deprive them of justice.

ELIJAH AND AHAZIAH.

Soon after these events Ahab came to his death at the battle of Ramoth-gilead, a town over which Syria and Israel were in dispute. Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, who seems to have held the position of war vassal to Ahab, was summoned to the latter's assistance. The prophets who were consulted gave promise of success in the campaign; all save one, Micaiah, who predicted Ahab's death. To avoid this augury, the king disguised himself, which nearly cost Jehoshaphat his life. But a random arrow penetrated Ahab's armor and he died at sunset, leaving his throne to his son, Ahaziah.

This king suffered an accident from a fall in his palace. Wishing to know the outcome of his injury, he sent an inquiry to Ekron, the shrine of the Philistine god Baal-zebub or Baal-zebul. But Elijah learned of the mission and met the messenger with words of scathing rebuke for the king who had sent to another god than Jehovah to make inquiry (2 Kings 1).

The remainder of this narrative is probably mere tradition. It is inconceivable that a man of God should have destroyed a hundred soldiers of the army of Israel, who were merely obedient to orders. But the account reflects the fierce spirit of the times and something of the rough and imperious character of Elijah as the nation remembered him. With a courage that welcomed the opportunity to face the unfaithful king, Elijah accompanied the messengers to the palace and delivered

to the king himself his message of condemnation and warning.

THE CHARACTER OF ELIJAH.

The closing scene of Elijah's life was told by the prophets in a manner to make clear their veneration for the man and their appreciation of his value to the nation (2 Kings 2:1-18). He had been like a wall of fire to Israel all the days of his public ministry. He was, as Elisha called him, and as Elisha in turn was called by a king of Israel at his death, "the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." His counsel was more valuable to Israel than armies. This does not mean that he took active part in the politics or military affairs of the day, but he was laying the foundations of future welfare by his efforts to extirpate idolatry and to keep the worship of Jehovah constantly before the public mind.

His influence upon the communities and groups of prophets was very great. In spite of his curt speech and his austere bearing, he was always a welcome guest at those places where they were gathered into companies. They followed the reports of his work with the keenest interest. They interpreted his messages to the more remote communities. They even followed him in person wherever they had opportunity.

The story of the passing of Elijah is in keeping with the veneration in which he was held. The old man and his youthful servant, Elisha, journeyed from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, and from Jericho to Jordan, everywhere hailed by the groups of prophets with reverence, and apprehension that their great master was about to leave them. Out beyond the Jordan they went, and, as the story was told by Elisha in later days and repeated from generation to generation, the closing hours were full of portent and wonder. The river opened before them to allow them dry passage. A whirlwind swept upon them from the desert. Fiery chargers ap-

peared in the heavens, and Elijah, disappearing from his companion's side, went up to God in a chariot of fire. Such traditions served to heighten still further the regard in which the prophet was held. And when Elisha returned from his farewell to his friend, the men of the prophetic groups looked upon him with a new respect, for he now bore not the mantle alone but the authority and the task of Elijah the Restorer.

XI.

ELISHA, THE PASTOR OF ISRAEL.

Text for Special Study, 2 Kings 4:8-37.

THE SUCCESSOR OF ELIJAH.

THE character of Elisha, the farmer of Abel-meholah who had been the companion of Elijah for many years, and who was destined at the prophet's departure to be his successor, is difficult to analyze with accuracy. In spite of the fact that a large amount of tradition has gathered about his name, we know comparatively little of the man himself. Our sources indicate that he was a singular combination of pastoral sympathy and fierce prophetic zeal. If he was more friendly with the people than Elijah had been, he was at the same time even more relentless in his efforts to extirpate the evil practices that were still too prevalent in the nation.

He seems to have lived at some retreat in Mt. Carmel, perhaps the place where Elijah's great victory was gained over the priests and prophets of the baals. From this place he went forth on his journeys to various towns in the nation. His coming and going were remarked with interest by the people, who delighted in his presence. Later on, if indications are correct, he had his home in Samaria, the capital. His work fell in the reigns of Jehoram (851-842 B. C.), Jehu (842-814), Jehoahaz (814-797) and Joash (797-781). Thus for more than fifty years he was the conspicuous representative of the worship of Jehovah. In the earlier portion of his ministry the service of the local baals was still permitted, in spite

of the reforms of Elijah. But in the later time, after the rise of Jehu, idolatry of this sort was completely suppressed by the bloody measures of reform which the prophets under Elisha's leadership inspired.

On his return from the scene of Elijah's farewell to Israel, he was hailed by the prophetic groups as their new leader. He assured them that it would be useless for them to search for the departed prophet, who, they imagined, might have wandered away into the desert (2 Kings 2:15-18). At Jericho, he found a means of sweetening the brackish waters of the spring, which has ever since borne the name of "Elisha's Fountain" (2 Kings 2:19-22). Something of the fierceness of his nature was revealed even thus early by his imprecation upon the youths at Bethel, who had mocked his tonsured head, and whose death by wild beasts was attributed to the prophet's curse (2 Kings 2:23-25).

THE EXPEDITION AGAINST MOAB.

As early as the days of Omri and Ahab the country of Moab had been subjected to Israel and had paid an annual tribute in wool and sheep. But Mesha, the king of the land, asserted his claim to independence and refused further levies.

Jehoram of Israel summoned his friend Jehoshaphat of Judah, who was perhaps under such obligations to Israel as to be practically a war-vassal, and together they planned the expedition against Moab (2 Kings 3:4-27). Their route was not across the Jordan and against the strongly intrenched northern frontier of Moab, but southward through Judah and across the territories of Edom south of the Dead Sea. For though Edom had regained something of its former power, it was still in a measure subject to Judah.

The prophetic writers of the Books of Kings were chiefly concerned in this expedition because of the part Elisha played in it. In passing through the hot, dry region, south of the Dead Sea, as the narrative runs, the

host nearly perished for lack of water. Finally Elisha was summoned to give his counsel. After uttering his disapproval of the king of Israel as a member of the family of Ahab, he demanded a minstrel by whose help he might secure the prophetic trance. Then he bade them dig trenches by which the waters from the heavy rains on the uplands of Edom might be brought down to the camp. By this device the army was saved.

The Moabites attempted an attack upon the Hebrew camp under the mistaken impression that conflict had arisen between its different sections. The result was a total defeat of the Moabites and the destruction of most of their cities, Kir-hareseth being the only survivor, according to the biblical account.

The king of Moab, in desperate straits, gathered his choicest warriors and made a determined dash to penetrate to the king of Edom, his ancient ally, either to take vengeance for his present perfidy, or in confidence that he would turn again to friendship in such an emergency. But all in vain; he could not break the line. And finally, as a last resort, he offered up his oldest son as a sacrifice on the walls of his one surviving city. So tremendous an invocation as this was believed to be irresistible, and even the Hebrew writers admit that Israel was defeated and compelled to return to its own land.

The Moabite Stone is the monumental witness of the historicity of this narrative in its main particulars. King Mesha recorded the outcome of this campaign on a tablet, which is now one of the prized possessions of the Louvre at Paris.

THE BOY AT SHUNEM.

The section which forms the theme of our special study (2 Kings 4:8-37) is an admirable illustration of the impression Elisha made upon the people of Israel, and the sympathetic assistance he offered them in their times of need. Nothing could better illustrate his pastoral

function as a kindly, interested friend than the story of the household at Shunem.

On the prophet's journeys to and from Carmel he had frequently to pass through the village of Shunem, which lies at the foot of Little Hermon on the borders of the plain of Esdraelon.

In this town there lived a woman, probably the wife of the sheikh, who offered the hospitality of her home whenever the prophet passed that way. Finally she suggested to her husband that it would be well for them to add to their simple home a chamber which Elisha might occupy whenever he desired. This was accordingly done, and the room was provided with bed, table, stool and candlestick.

The prophet, feeling that some return was due to such a spirit of good will, asked the woman what he could do for her. With the influence which he had in Israel, it would have been easy to make request of the king or the general of the army. Perhaps there was some position to which she wished her husband promoted. But she declined all offers and insisted that her life was sufficiently happy, dwelling as she did among her own people. But the prophet's servant, Gehazi, suggested that as there was no child in the family, this would be a blessing beyond all other prizes. The prophet prayed for her, and the woman bore a son whose presence crowned the household at Shunem with its greatest joy.

But in the time of harvest the boy, working among the reapers, was stricken with the heat. The father sent him to the house, thinking little of the incident. But the child, we are told, died before noon. The woman in despair started at once for the mountain retreat of the prophet. She would accept no substitute, but demanded that Elisha himself come with her. The efforts of the servant, Gehazi, to arouse the child were unavailing. And even Elisha found the struggle a desperate one. But he brought the living child to his mother, and thus deepened her obligation to him and Jehovah.

It has often been suggested that this story is the duplicate of that found in the life of Elijah (1 Kings 17). That it was understood to be an actual revival of a dead child there can be no doubt. Nor did ancient Israel perceive anything inconsistent with the order of nature in such an act performed by a prophet like Elisha.

A subsequent incident is related of this same woman of Shunem, in connection with the restoration of her property following a period of absence from the country (2 Kings 8:1-6).

NAAMAN, THE SYRIAN.

Around a character so impressive as that of Elisha there grew up many traditions of miracle-working. The cleansing of the fountain at Jericho, the visitation of death upon the youths at Bethel, the increased supply of oil for the wife of one of the dead prophets (2 Kings 4:1-7), the healing of the poisoned pottage (2 Kings 4:38-41), the feeding of a hundred men with a limited supply of bread, fruits, and grain (2 Kings 4:42-44), the miraculous recovery of an axe from the waters of the Jordan (2 Kings 6:1-7), and other acts of similar character were only deemed the expected proofs of prophetic power, as that and later generations reflected on the actual services of Elisha to his people. No doubt the basis of these beliefs was the strong personality of the prophet, and his actual healing of diseases.

An instance of the sort is given in connection with the relations of Israel to Syria, the chief political problem of the time. The greatest captain of Ben-hadad, king of Syria, was Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-27). But he fell under the affliction of leprosy. A maiden of his household, whose home was in Israel, told such stories of the prophet's power to heal disease that the warrior came with a retinue, bearing gifts and a letter from the Syrian king to Jeroboam asking for the recovery of his health.

The king of Israel was in fear of some trick to involve him in war with his strong rival. But Elisha sent word

that he would deal with the case, and bade Naaman go wash in the Jordan seven times. This proved effective, in spite of the captain's disinclination to plunge in the muddy waters of Israel.

Elisha refused all rewards, but Gehazi, his servant, more avaricious, secured from the courtier a sum of money and certain garments, only to incur the prophet's wrath and the curse of hereditary leprosy. But the later appearance of Gehazi at the court of Israel makes somewhat questionable the lasting effect of the prophet's reproof (2 Kings 8:1-6).

THE PROPHET AT DOTHAN.

This is another of the romantic narratives collected regarding Elisha (2 Kings 6:8-23). His advice to the king of Israel had proved so effective that the Syrians wished to secure him as prisoner and thus prevent their further defeats. They surrounded the town of Dothan where he was lodging, and in the morning his servant was paralyzed with fear at the sight of the gathered Syrian host.

But the prophet assured him that the hosts of God were still more powerful. And the servant saw with opened eyes the mountains round about filled with horses and chariots. The prophet struck blind the Syrian force and led it helpless to Samaria. And when the king would have fallen upon these enemies and cut them to pieces, the prophet forbade this act and commanded Jehoram to give his prisoners food and drink and set them at liberty. This act of clemency sounds much like that recorded of Ahab when he rendered such kindness to Ben-hadad and his army (1 Kings 20:29-34).

XII.

THE REFORMS OF ELISHA.

Text for Special Study, 2 Kings 9:1-37.

DAYS OF FAMINE.

THE war between Ben-hadad of Syria and Jehoram or Joram, the son of Ahab of Israel, went on. The Syrians besieged Samaria and reduced it to such straits that the people were compelled at times to resort to the awful devices of cannibalism. In the sullen temper bred of these sufferings the court officials and the king were inclined to blame Elisha for their misfortunes, though the reason for this attitude is difficult to understand. Was it because he had counseled the kindly treatment of the Syrian soldiers sent for his arrest at Dothan? At this time he seems to have been living in Samaria, whither, perhaps, he had come from Carmel to reside.

The record states that when the siege was at its sorest point and all hope of rescue or relief had been abandoned, Elisha astonished everyone with the prediction that within a few days there should be a deliverance. The king, who in the distress of the hour wore sackcloth under his royal robes, could not believe the prediction, and one of his captains openly scouted the seemingly impossible prophecy. But in some strange way, as we are told, the Syrian army was suddenly seized with one of those night panics so common in ancient warfare, and imagining that they heard the approach of an army, conjectured that the king of Israel had hired Egyptian and Hittite allies. In terror the Syrians fled, leaving

their camp and weapons, garments, horses and asses, and whatever they possessed. The entire road to Jordan from Samaria was marked by the tokens of their headlong flight (2 Kings 6:24-7:20).

The discovery of this fortunate relief of Samaria was made by four lepers who stole out at night to beg some scraps of food in the Syrian camp. They came with their good news to the king, who could hardly be persuaded that the enemy had fled. The prediction of Elisha was completely verified that Samaria should have plenty of provision and that prices would suddenly decline. The captain who had doubted his word was placed by the king at the gate of the city, but was trampled in the rush of the people to secure the abandoned provisions and treasure.

ELISHA IN DAMASCUS.

The story of Elisha's visit to Damascus and his interview with Hazael, the officer of Ben-hadad the king, is difficult to understand (2 Kings 8:7-15). How to account for the presence of the prophet in a foreign capital, particularly as he was known to be the friend and chief counselor of the king of Israel, is a matter of perplexity. Perhaps in this instance, as in others, we have only the tradition of a later time, which attempts to widen the sphere of Elisha's influence and to increase the honors which came as the result of his activity and leadership.

The story proceeds with the statement that Hazael came from his master with an enormous present of all the valuable sorts of things for which Damascus was famous, to the extent of forty camel loads. The purpose of this embassy was to learn the outcome of Ben-hadad's sickness. Elisha replied to Hazael that there was no reason why the king should not recover, but yet he would die and not live. He further went on to intimate that Hazael himself would succeed the reigning king, and would be the instrument of terrible Syrian depredations

on the frontier of Israel. The courtier returned to his master with the assurance that he should surely recover. But on the following day he took pains to fulfil the latter part of Elisha's statement by smothering the king with a wet face-cloth. It is possible that the ravages of Hazael referred to by the prophet Amos (Am. 1:3-5) were in the mind of the author of this narrative, who wished to bring the events within the predictive scope of Elisha's work.

THE CALL OF JEHU.

A part of the program suggested in connection with the later years of the prophet Elijah was the anointing of Hazael as king of Syria, and of Jehu to be king of Israel (1 Kings 19:16). Whether this was a statement included by the prophets in view of the actual facts of later times or a real prediction is immaterial. Certain it is that when Elisha became convinced that the house of Ahab could not be trusted to restore the worship of Jehovah to its proper place, he turned elsewhere and chose one in whose fidelity he felt he could place reliance (2 Kings 9:1-13).

Jehu, who is usually called the son of Nimshi, was one of the chief captains of the army. He had been close to Ahab as a soldier of merit and faithfulness, and was with the king on the day when the memorable interview took place between the latter and Elijah in the field of Naboth (2 Kings 9:25, 26).

Joram, the king of Israel, had been besieging Ramoth-gilead, but being wounded, had retired to his summer palace at Jezreel for recovery, taking with him his nephew, Ahaziah of Judah, who had come at his summons to assist him against the Syrians. When the kings departed, Jehu was left apparently in charge of the siege. A portion of the city of Ramoth-gilead had already fallen into the hands of Israel, but perhaps the citadel remained to be reduced.

One day there appeared suddenly in the circle of offi-

cers standing about Jehu, a young man whose garb and manner showed him to be a member of the prophetic group. He strode up to Jehu and informed him that he had a secret message to deliver. The captain took him into the house where he was staying, and there was told that he was to become king of Israel, and was to take up the task of restoring the true worship and avenging the blood of the martyrs who had perished in the persecutions waged by the house of Ahab against the true faith.

When he had delivered this message, the prophet rushed away again in hot haste and Jehu came forth to his astonished and bantering fellow officers, answering their eager inquiries regarding the mission of the mad messenger with the words, "He spake to me saying, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel!" Thereupon the soldiers with enthusiasm cast their garments on the staircase of the public building where they were met, and placing Jehu upon them, blew the trumpet and proclaimed him king.

In accordance with his vigorous character Jehu took immediate steps to secure the authority thus so strangely promised him. He gave strict orders that no one was to be permitted to leave the city save himself and the chosen company he selected. Then he mounted his chariot and accompanied by a troop of warriors on whom he could place implicit dependence, he rode in furious haste toward Jezreel. That was one of the memorable journeys chronicled in the Old Testament.

Arrived within sight of the walls of Jezreel, he was seen by the watchman on the tower who recognized him at once by his merciless driving. He passed the word to the king, who forthwith sent out a horseman to ascertain the reason for Jehu's approach. But the horseman was bidden turn in behind the company, and a second messenger sent on the same errand was likewise detained. The king understood only too well the sinister meaning of this bold coming of his chief captain. Bidding his

friend, the king of Judah, seek refuge in flight, he turned to escape the hands of the warrior. But Jehu cut him down with an arrow, and Ahaziah, wounded by some of Jehu's followers, fled to Megiddo, where he died. Thus, in one day, the kings of Israel and Judah both perished.

The body of Joram was cast into the field of Naboth, and the queen-mother Jezebel, royal and fearless to the end, was thrown from a window of the palace by the chamberlains at the command of Jehu, and perished under the feet of his horses. In this summary seizure of the power, the prophets saw the fulfillment of their highest hopes. They were not sensitive to the atrocities committed by the usurper provided the long nightmare of the worship of the baals could be brought to a close.

JEHU'S BLOODY REIGN.

Few events in the history of Israel seem more ferocious than the measures undertaken by Jehu to carry out the will of his friends the prophets (2 Kings 9:10-37). Not content with the death of the two kings and the queen-mother, he sent word to the officials of the capital at Samaria either to send him the heads of all the family of Ahab to the number of seventy, or to defend their city and fight. They accepted the easier conditions and delivered to him the bloody trophies of the slaughter, which were piled in two heaps at the gates of Jezreel.

He then took his journey to Samaria to establish his kingship there in the capital. On the way he fell in with a company of royal guests from the court at Jerusalem, coming to visit their relative, King Ahaziah. These he took and put to death, to the number forty-two. Was he planning to seize the throne of Judah as well as that of Israel, and to reign as David and Solomon had reigned over a united nation? If such was his thought, it came to nothing, for events in Judah took a very different course.

As he neared the city of Samaria, he was met by Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, the head of that company

of desert dwellers and Nazarites that has usually passed under the name of the Rechabites. They were the representatives of the fierce and conservative element in Israel, and rejoiced at the drastic measures Jehu was adopting in behalf of the Jehovah worship.

Jehu now undertook the wholesale extermination of the adherents of the baal worship. He summoned them under the guise of friendliness to a great festival in honor of their religion. The heathen temple was completely filled. Then taking pains to assure himself that no worshiper of Jehovah was within the structure, Jehu turned loose upon them the soldiery and slaughtered them to the last one. The symbols of the heathen worship were completely demolished, and the place was turned into a dumping ground for years.

Perhaps the strangest part of this narrative is the prophetic commendation pronounced upon Jehu for this savage reformation, into which he had thrown himself with such zeal. The prophets undoubtedly believed that the new king was pleasing God, for they pronounced upon him blessings which include the secure rule of his house for at least four generations. It is interesting to compare these extravagant encomiums (2 Kings 10:30), with the condemnation afterward voiced against Jehu and his bloody doings by a prophet who was worthy to stand on a much higher plane than Elisha (Hosea 1:4). But Elisha and the prophets of his day spoke the message of God as they understood it. The growth of insight and the lifting of prophetic levels from generation to generation through the history of the Old Testament is the convincing proof of the divine factor in the work of these devoted men.

LAST DAYS OF ELISHA.

The house of Jehu declined rapidly after these first days of furious reform. Already in Jehu's time the Syrians began to ravage the frontier again and to limit Israel's territory. We are informed by the Assyrian

monuments that Jehu paid tribute to Shalmanezzer II, in 842 B. C., and that this tribute consisted of gold, silver and other things of value. No doubt it was the purpose of Jehu to secure the friendship of the great Assyrian in his contest with Hazael of Damascus, but the tribute seems to have done him little good. He and his son, Jehoahaz (814-797), and his grandson, Joash (797-781 B. C.), were unable to protect their kingdom and fell gradually to great extremities of trouble until it seemed that Israel was about to perish at the hands of this strong neighbor.

When Joash came to visit Elisha upon his death-bed, he realized the value of the prophet's work to the state, and cried out, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof" (2 Kings 13:14-21). In this exclamation he voiced the feeling in Israel that Elisha was worth more to the state than armies of soldiers. Even in death the prophet's fierce hatred of Syria manifested itself in his command to the king to shoot with his arrows eastward through the open window, thus symbolizing the undying hatred of the nation toward its great antagonist. And when Joash took a bundle of arrows and struck repeatedly upon the earth to please the dying man, Elisha fiercely reproved him that he had struck but three times, intimating that he should have kept on smiling until Syria was completely destroyed.

A curious legend survives regarding the body of the dead prophet. A skirmish between Moabites and Hebrews took place in the vicinity of Elisha's grave. In burying one of the victims the soldiers hastily threw the body into the sepulchre of the prophet, and instantly as it touched the bones of Elisha the man revived and stood upon his feet.

Thus lived and died the last of the older school of prophetic heroes of Israel. Elisha differed from Elijah in living closer to the people, but he shared much of the fierce zeal of his master. And his reforms, though

thoroughgoing, brought Israel to a physical weakness that came near the border of destruction. But he prepared the way for a better order of things. The open worship of the baals was henceforth impossible in Israel. And the memory of the life and services of this remarkable man, weighted as it was with fierceness of temper, and obscured by tradition and legend, remains one of the valuable records of moral leadership in ancient Israel.

XIII.

THE PROPHETS OF THE JUDEAN SCHOOL.

Text for Special Study, Gen. 32:22-32.

SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS.

IT MUST not be forgotten that in addition to the activities of the greater prophets with which these studies thus far have been concerned, there were many men of the prophetic type whose work is only casually mentioned in our records, and yet who constituted the rank and file of the army of religious teachers in ancient Israel. Glimpses are caught of such men now and then, but for the most part they pass without notice in the crowded pages of the Old Testament.

These men formed an order in the life of Israel, one of the three great orders of teachers—priests, prophets and sages. In the very early days of the nation they were represented by the roving mendicant groups, such as those met by Saul on his journey home from the interview with Samuel (1 Sam. 10:5-13). There seemed little promise of good in such bands of enthusiasts. But it is the glory of Samuel and other great men of the age that they did not despise these ignorant advocates of the national faith. Samuel gathered them about him, and helped to localize them in the towns to which he made his annual pilgrimages. We catch glimpses of groups of prophets now and then with Samuel at their head (1 Sam. 7:16; 19:18-24).

These organizations seem to have grown in numbers and influence. In the days of Elijah and Elisha they were recognized as an important branch of the religious

equipment of the nation. They were called "sons of the prophets" (1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15), not because they were members of prophetic families, but because in Israel it was the custom to speak of a man as "the son" of whatever trade or profession he followed. The "sons of the prophets" were the members of the prophetic guilds or groups. They seem to have been distinguished by their rough clothing (2 Kings 1:8; Zech. 13:4) and probably wore the tonsure as a mark of their class (2 Kings 2:23; 1 Kings 20:41).

We have seen in earlier chapters that there were other prophets in Israel than the men whose lives were most noteworthy. These obscurer men, sometimes named (1 Kings 16:1; 22:8) and sometimes nameless (1 Sam. 28:6; 1 Kings 13:1f, 11f, 18:4; 20:13, 22; 22:6) were in increasing measure the center and organizing force of religion, even to a greater extent than the priests. They interpreted the spirit and the messages of the greater prophets to the common people, and carried on the work of religious education in the districts remote from the centers. They were like the preaching friars of the middle ages, who brought to the people the sanctions of their religion.

As they lived in communities like Bethel (2 Kings 2:3), Jericho (1 Kings 2:5), Gilgal (1 Kings 4:38), and Carmel (2 Kings 4:25; 6:1), it was natural that they should preserve in these centers the memorials of Israel's past religious experiences in the form of written and oral accounts and traditions of the earlier life of the nation. In this manner they served the purpose of schools where the younger men could receive instruction from their elders, and on occasion from the great prophets like Elijah and Elisha, who passed their way. For this reason it has become the custom to speak of "the Schools of the Prophets," without intimation that the work of these groups was formal or complete. Still, with the exception of the various sanctuaries, where doubtless priestly instruction was carried on, they were the nearest approach

to educational foundations in that period in Israel, and the results of their work must have been widespread and profound.

THE JUDEAN SCHOOL OF PROPHETS.

The nation had already been divided into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah before the prophetic groups began to assume definite form and activities. And though there was a common feeling, and indeed at times actual co-operation, between the prophets of the North and the South (cf. 1 Kings 12:15 with 1 Kings 12:21-24), yet it was natural that the two bodies of prophets should work independently, and that their preaching in public and the narratives of the past preserved, recorded and copied in their schools should be colored by their respective national relations and points of view.

Thus there were produced in the period between the close of Solomon's reign and the downfall of the Kingdom of Israel two important prophetic narratives, the one in the south, the other in the north, each dealing, from the standpoint of its national interests, with the ethical and religious history of Israel, down to the days of the writers. It is with the first of these narratives, that of the Judean group, that the present chapter is concerned.

Where these prophets lived, whether in one or several of those towns where prophetic groups were assembled in Judah, we do not know. If we can judge by the character of the work they have left us, the attempt was made to use the story of Israel's past history not in the spirit of the court chroniclers, as the mere statement of facts, but as a selective employment of earlier incidents in the lives of the patriarchs or the experiences of the nation to impress the truths of Israel's religion on the popular mind. They were not attempting to teach either patriarchal story or national history, but to make both of these teach religion. Their reason for the selection of this body of experience out of the past was its fa-

miliarity to the people, and its adaptability to religious purposes. The stories of the past were the common property of all the clans and families of Israel. No other stories were so interesting or significant as these to the people. To employ them in preaching was to gain popular attention. And to record them as the material of religious instruction, for fresh preaching and for the education of younger prophets, was the best means of keeping the nation true to prophetic ideals.

THE NARRATIVES OF THE PAST.

Just as our sources for the life of Jesus are the four Gospels, whose material is blended in the complete narrative of the "lives" of the Lord from the days of the early church to the present time, so the records of ancient Israel now contained in the books from Genesis to Judges, Samuel and Kings, are composed of several strands, sources or documents. The discovery that there were these different literary sources underlying our present biblical books was first made by observing the differences in the use of the name for deity. It was seen that in some places Jehovah or Jahveh (usually translated Lord) was used in our English Bibles, while in other cases Elohim (translated God) was employed.

It was soon discerned that where these differences of usage occurred, there were many other variations even more striking. In fact it is evident that editorial revisions have often obscured the original use of the divine names, so that these are only generally suggestive, and not the important criteria of the analysis. The text for special study used in this chapter is an instance in point. Today it is the common belief of biblical scholars that there are at least four main bodies of writing which have been combined in these biblical books as we have them. And the first of these writings or sources is the one we are considering in this chapter. It is usually called the Judean prophetic document. It also makes

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consistent use of the name Jehovah or Jahveh. For these reasons it has often been called the J document.

It will be of interest to trace some of its sections, as they are easily discriminated from the other writings by their differences of language, style, usage and religious teaching. There is the earliest story of creation and sin (Gen. 2:4b-3:24), of Cain, the first murderer (4:2-16a), the story of Lamech (4:19-24), of Noah the vineyard keeper and his sons (9:20-27), of the tower of Babel (11:1-9), and so on, through a long list. (For details see the literature suggested in connection with this chapter at the end of the volume). In addition to these instances in which our document furnishes the only record we have, there are many cases in which materials from it and from other sources, which we shall study in due course, are combined, as in the ancestral lists of Gen. 4 and 5, the narratives of the flood, chapters 6-9, and the table of nations, chapter 10.

We have an interesting parallel to this composite history in a Christian work of the second century. Tatian, a pupil of Justin Martyr, prepared a record of Jesus' life by combining the materials of the four Gospels into one continuous narrative. Where the versions were different, he usually adopted the fuller one. Where the subject matter was similar, only one source was used. Where each presented independent details, he combined them, by taking verses or fragments of verses, from each. At times he added a few words of his own to explain or introduce a statement copied from one of the four documents. The result is a composite work widely used in the early church. If this work had superseded the present four Gospels, as they superseded the many fragments of "sayings of Jesus" and other written materials which were in circulation in the early church (Luke 1:1-4), we should have precisely the same problem in attempting to

restore the four Gospels that we now have in regaining the four or more sources of the Hexateuch.

CHARACTER AND PURPOSE OF THE JUDEAN DOCUMENT.

The written materials left to us by the Judean school of prophets must be taken as representative of the truths these prophets were accustomed to teach. They emphasize the consequences of sin. They point out the intimate, friendly and even human character of Jehovah, as partaking of the activities and concerned with the tasks of men. Right and wrong are dependent on the divine will, and obedience to Jehovah is the whole duty of man. They are not sensitive to moral imperfections, such as lying, fraud and other forms of cleverness, as are the later sources. They make little of formal religious functions, like those of priesthood and sacrifice, but they magnify the sacredness of places which have become holy by the presence of Jehovah. As is natural, they lay emphasis on the story of the southern tribes rather than the northern. Judah is the chief among the sons of Jacob. Joshua is less significant in these stories than Caleb, the hero of Judah.

The literary character of the narratives is likewise interesting. The style is free and flowing. The scenes are sketched with vividness and dramatic power. Dialogue is frequent. The vocabulary is picturesque. Ancient songs and proverbs are quoted. And certain characteristic words and sayings occur with frequency.

The date of these writings, which is also, of course, the date of the school and religious conceptions which they reflect, can be determined with reasonable exactness. Many indications point to the period which we have reached in our study of the prophets—the days between the work of Elijah and Elisha on the one side and that of Amos and Hosea on the other. The century from 850 to 750 B. C. is the appropriate date. The reasons for these conclusions will be found in ample form in the literature already referred to.

The value of this consideration of the Judean school at this point in our course will be seen to include two factors. The first is the light it throws upon prophecy as a living force during a period when we know of no prophets of great importance in Israel. As in the Christian Church, in periods in which there are no great reformers and leaders there are hundreds of quiet consecrated men preaching and writing in interpretation of the gospel, so in ancient Israel, God never left himself without witness, even in the days when the great prophets were silent. In the second place, we are thus furnished with a convincing testimony regarding the character and ideals of prophetic work in this age. The J narratives, carefully studied, as they review the stories of the past, give us a fairly competent view of the moral and religious convictions that had become established in the life of Israel. That which they admired and that which they hated, the sins to which they had become sensitive and the errors of which they were as yet unconscious, in their growth under the divine instruction, are here disclosed. We are only beginning to discover what a wealth of material is contained in these records, not merely for a knowledge of the early life of the Hebrews, but even more for a summary of prophetic ideals at the time when the records themselves took form.

A REPRESENTATIVE NARRATIVE.

As a narrative characteristic of this source, we select Gen. 32:22-32. It might seem at first glance that we are disturbing the regular order of our progress down through the long course of Hebrew history. This narrative goes back to patriarchal days, and relates one of the traditional experiences of Jacob, the national ancestor. But the purpose in its present use is to illustrate the nature of the material employed by the prophets of the Judean group in their work of making known the nature and purposes of Jehovah. It is a graphic account of a divine revelation to Jacob in a personal interview

with a heavenly Being, who wrestled with him through the night. The story reflects the primitive conception of deity. It gives the traditional origin of the word "Israel," and also of "Peniel." It states the reason why the hip muscle was regarded as sacred. And the conception of deity is highly anthropomorphic. Moreover it illustrates the occasional employment of the term Elohim (God) in the Judean document, due no doubt to editorial hands. But the splendid ideals of the narrative—the return of the crafty and underhanded Jacob from his hard experiences in Syria to face his future in Canaan, the last great discipline which awaits him before he can cease to be Jacob the Supplanter and learn to be Israel, the Prince of God—are the imperishable features of a story that has taught its lesson to all the generations. The spiritual meanings of the wrestling of Jacob with the Angel of God do not depend on manner, place or historicity, but are the results of that symbolic transaction in which lameness, curvature and incapacity passed forever from Jacob's soul to his body, and he became worthy of his great destiny.

XIV.

THE PROPHETS OF NORTHERN ISRAEL.

Text for Special Study, Genesis 50:15-26.

NORTHERN PROPHETIC SCHOOLS.

THE general statement regarding the rise of the schools of the prophets in ancient Israel will be found in the previous chapter. The reader should review that statement carefully as it presents the general considerations relating to the growth of narratives of the past, and the particular features of those which arose in the southern or Judean school. It will be remembered, however, that the prophets most conspicuous up to this time really belonged to the Northern Kingdom, whose capital was at Samaria. To be sure, Samuel lived before the division of the kingdom, and so may be thought of as belonging to North and South alike. One of the places most conspicuously connected with his activity was Mizpah, just north of Jerusalem.

But Ahijah, the leader of the prophets at the close of Solomon's reign, lived in Shiloh, the town in which Samuel spent his youth; and Elijah and Elisha were both active in a ministry which was almost entirely confined to the Kingdom of Israel. The places which they visited in the rounds of their prophetic work were such towns as Gilgal, Bethel, Carmel and Jericho. In these places the schools of the prophets were located, such as are referred to in connection with the lives of these prophets. (For the references, see paragraph 1 of the previous chapter.)

In these places the groups of prophets resided and

carried on their work. They probably lived in small communities, and perhaps resembled somewhat the monks of the Middle Ages in their manual labors and their preaching. From these centers they went forth to instruct the people in the more remote sections of the country, and thus kept alive the religious spirit in communities which the greater prophets could not reach.

THE EPHRAIMITE NARRATIVE.

In the last chapter it was noted that the narratives regarding Israel's early career are preserved in a series of four documents, which are woven together in the fairly continuous record of the early portion of the Old Testament, from Genesis to Kings. That chapter dealt with the earliest of these, the Judean or southern prophetic document, usually known as J, because it generally employs the divine name Jehovah or Jahveh, and also because it is Judean in its character. The present chapter considers the second of these sources. This one is not so frequently quoted in the Old Testament, probably for the reason that the Judean narrative was fuller and more satisfactory. Yet it is not difficult to trace the northern narrative, as it appears here and there in the records of Israel's life. Its characteristics are marked with a degree of clearness which leaves little doubt in the mind of the careful student.

In the earlier portion of the narrative preceding Exodus 3, this record employs consistently the word "Elohim," (translated "God") as its name for deity. After the record of the divine revelation to Moses in Exodus 3, however, it employs also the other name Jehovah or Jahveh, so that the title of deity is no longer a discriminating mark. But among the indications of its individuality which are most convincing, is its definite attitude of interest in the affairs of Northern Israel, whose representative tribe, Ephraim, gave its name to the entire kingdom of the North. It is therefore appropriate to speak of it as the Ephraimite document, and

this, in addition to its use of Elohim for God, has led to the general employment of the letter E as descriptive of this series of narratives.

The northern character of this document is shown in a number of ways. The places which are particularly important are those of Israel rather than Judah. Southern Israel is ignored, but such places as Bethel, Shechem and Samaria are especially prominent. In the narratives of personal exploits the men of the North are far more prominent than those of the South. Among the sons of Jacob, Reuben and not Judah is the leader. Joshua, a member of the tribe of Ephraim, is represented as the successor of Moses and the leader of all the tribes in the conquest of Canaan. The story of Joseph, the ancestor of Ephraim and Manasseh, is presented at length in this source.

THE CHARACTER OF THE RECORD.

The first appearance of the Ephraimite prophetic narrative is in the story of the divine covenant and promise (in fragments found in Gen. 15). From that time forward the narrative appears occasionally, in such chapters as 21, 25, 27, 28, etc., through the books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and even in the records of later times. (For details of the analysis see the literature cited for this chapter at the end of the volume.) There are only a few cases in which the Ephraimite document stands as the only source of information. Such examples are the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22:1-9), Joseph's fame as an interpreter of dreams (Gen. 40:1-23), the later days of Joseph (Gen. 50:15-26), and Israel's conflict with the Amalekites (Ex. 17:8-16).

In other instances, however, in which it is quoted along with the Judean source, it presents features peculiar to itself, such as the making of the golden calf at Sinai (Exodus 32), the appointment of the seventy elders (Num. 11:16, 17, 25-30), etc. It has a series of words and expressions which are peculiar to itself, not found

in the other sources. For example, it uses Horeb, where the J document reads Sinai. It uses Amorites for the inhabitants of Canaan, where the southern narrative uses Canaanites, and it employs the name of Jacob instead of Israel.

PURPOSES OF THE WRITERS.

In the Ephraimite prophetic narratives the didactic and religious motives are more prominent than in the earlier source. The rule of God in the nation is of more significance than the history of the nation itself. The writers are greatly concerned with the leaders of Israel, who are understood to be divinely chosen instruments for the accomplishment of the will of God. The achievements of the people are secured not so much by human effort and natural means as by divine interposition. The chief purpose of the Ephraimite writers seems to have been to show that by submission to God's rule and the counsels of his representatives, the prophets, Israel in former days had enjoyed prosperity and the assurance of the favor of God, but that whenever the people rebelled, disaster fell upon them.

In this narrative the anthropomorphic or human pictures of God are rarely met. He does not appear in human form, but reveals himself in dreams and through his angel. Moses alone is represented as speaking to him face to face.

This source presents a somewhat purer and higher view of deity than the Judean. Those things which reflected unfavorably upon the character of the heroes of Israel's life are eliminated. In this record Abraham does not drive Hagar from his home until he learns that it is the divine will. In the story of his deception regarding his wife, it is explained that he did not really tell a falsehood. It is the divine intervention rather than Jacob's shrewdness which brings his success in his dealings with Laban. It would seem that the writers were somewhat more sensitive to ethical motives than those of the Judean source.

It was understood by these writers that the high places and the symbols of divine worship which were erected at such spots, were legitimate. But they were already hostile to the employment of images in worship, as is shown by the narrative regarding the golden calf in Exodus 32.

The date of this document was probably from fifty to one hundred years later than that of the Judean source. Perhaps the middle of the eighth century (750 B. C.), would be an approximately correct date. It is not improbable that later additions were made to the original narratives by other prophetic writers before they were combined in a common document including the Judean and Ephraimite sources.

THE LAST DAYS OF JOSEPH.

The narrative selected for special study (Gen. 50:15-26) is full of interest as presenting in vivid form the story of Joseph's old age and death. It is not selected because of its pertinence to the line of history which has formed the background of the study in prophecy thus far, but because it deals in a concise manner with a situation of great interest to the Old Testament student.

In spite of Joseph's generous treatment of his brothers who had wronged him in early life, they were suspicious that after the restraints of his father's presence were removed, they might suffer from his wrath. They sought the first opportunity, accordingly, of presenting to him their submission and request for full forgiveness. This petition they couched in terms of a command or an entreaty of Jacob himself, uttered before his death, that Joseph would forgive the transgression of his brothers. And to this word they added their own earnest petition.

Joseph, who had already done so much for his brothers that they should have known fully the depths of his affection for them, wept when he received the message.

It revealed their limited understanding of him. Moreover, it recalled unhappy days.

When, therefore, the brothers appeared before him to press their request for entire forgiveness, Joseph disclosed to them the full-hearted and generous love which he had cherished for them all through the years of their lurking fear. He even went so far as to insist that their evil deeds had been turned into good by the providence of God, and that actually they were the cause of saving multitudes of Egypt's people in the days of the famine. This over-generous view quieted their fears and they went away comforted in spirit.

Years passed on, and Joseph lived in Egypt, still among his people. His children multiplied about him. Ephraim and Manasseh, his two sons, became the heads of numerous clans. Something of the interest of the writer in Ephraim, the leading tribe of Northern Israel, is apparent in this story.

When the end came Joseph begged his brethren not to leave his body in the foreign land whither they had come by migration, but to take his bones with them back to the place which had been promised to Abraham, their ancestor. Comforted by the assurance which rested upon the oath of his people, Joseph died, and his body was embalmed after the custom of his adopted people.

Thus is brought to its close a series of narratives concerning Joseph that must have proved among the most useful of prophetic vehicles for the inculcation of the great lessons of fidelity, chastity and generous good-will in obedience to God. These lessons were the keynote of prophetic instruction, and such lessons the writers of the Judean and Ephraimite documents alike were concerned to enforce.

XV.

AMOS OF TEKOA.

Text for Special Study, Amos 1:1-2:16.

THE DAYS OF JEROBOAM II.

FIVE kings of Israel belonged to the dynasty of Jehu. That warrior, who had carried out such a merciless reformation, exterminating the worship of the baals in the kingdom, was followed in 814 B. C. by his son, Jehoahaz. But the weakness of the kingdom, due to the losses of its best blood by war and massacre, were so serious that before the reign of Jehoahaz came to its close in 797 B. C., public affairs had reached their lowest ebb. The borders of the kingdom had shrunk, and the army was hardly more than a name.

Elisha was still living when Jehoash, the third king of the dynasty, came to the throne. In his days there was some revival of the fortunes of the nation. Jehoash was a warrior of ability, and recovered much of the territory which Syria had taken from his father. This was in accordance with the desire and promise of Elisha, whose interview with the king is related in 2 Kings 13:14-19.

The fourth king of this line was the most notable of all. Jeroboam II began his reign in 781 B. C., and during his long rule of forty years, the kingdom regained almost all of the territories and prestige which it had lost under his predecessors (2 Kings 14:23-29). The prophetic writers give but little space to this remarkable man. Seven verses comprise all the biblical record of his reign. But we are fortunate in possessing the contemporary utterances of the prophet Amos, in

whose sermons the character of the times is made evident.

It was not to be expected that a man whose policy was so patterned after the broad ideals of Solomon and Ahab would meet the approval of the prophets in Israel. But they were compelled to record the fact that in spite of the evil which he did in following "the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin," he was yet so successful that he restored the frontiers of Israel to their full limits. His kingdom extended from Hamath, between the Lebanon ranges far to the north, to the Dead Sea. He is even credited with having taken Damascus, but there is no independent record of such an event, and Amos speaks of that city as a foreign capital on which judgment was to fall for its sin.

It is not improbable that the decline and recovery of the fortunes of Israel was in part due to the condition of the Assyrian empire in the east. When Assyria was weak or quiet, Syria had an opportunity to continue its depredations against Israel. But when, as in the times of Jehoash, the successors of Shalmanezar II began to disturb the peace of Syria, as happened in 803 B. C., when Damascus was besieged, the pressure of war compelled Syria to relax her hold upon her western borders toward Israel. Indeed, it is probable that Jehoash in his wars against Syria made his submission to the Assyrians, and together with the neighboring states of Phoenicia, Edom and Philistia, paid tribute to the power on the Tigris.

POPULAR RELIGION IN ISRAEL.

The influences of Elisha's life had not been forgotten when Amos appeared in Bethel about 760 B. C. There were many prophets at work, both publicly and privately. Only a short time before, the groups of prophets in the kingdom of Israel had gathered their interpretation of the past into the Ephraimite record, with which the previous chapter dealt. The schools of the prophets

were perhaps at their height of power. Yet they had never undertaken the task which was now becoming imperative.

The worship of the golden calves set up by Jeroboam I at Bethel and Dan went onward without awakening any resentment on the part of the religious teachers of the age. The worship was not intended to be of heathen character, for the images were understood to be representations of Jehovah and not of foreign gods. The baal worship had been practically destroyed by the reformation of Jehu. National prosperity had given the people a sense of security and optimism which expressed itself in the religion as in all other public activities.

To the men of the times who had seen the drastic reforms of Jehu and the decline and subsequent rise of the political fortunes of the kingdom, it seemed a day of delightful prosperity and hopefulness. The prophets of the schools found nothing to condemn in the ordinary worship of the two great sanctuaries and the many other local high-places. Religion was never more sumptuous or regular in its ministries. Jehovah was worshiped and was apparently blessing his people with bountiful harvests and successful campaigns. Why should any one speak a word of reproach and warning at a time like this?

THE MISSION OF AMOS.

It was just at this time when all things seemed favorable that a prophet appeared in Bethel with a message so sinister and full of warning that it seriously disturbed the optimism of rulers, priests and prophets, and seemed entirely out of harmony with the light-hearted and self-indulgent spirit of the age.

In the town of Tekoa, a few miles southeast from Jerusalem, in the kingdom of Judah, there lived a farmer and herdsman named Amos. The region in which he resided was not rich, and probably most of the people lived a rather pinched and meagre life. The kingdom of

Judah did not compare in extent and fertility with its northern neighbor. Its rough, rocky southern slopes were little conducive either to agriculture or the raising of fruit. Amos seems to have made a somewhat precarious living from the cultivation of an inferior variety of figs that never quite came to natural ripeness in the colder uplands of Judah. He also raised cattle for the market, and disposed of his commodities in the neighboring market towns.

The austerity of life in such conditions, with a certain sensitiveness to the will of God as revealed through the prophets of the past, had prepared this man Amos to estimate at their true value the superficial prosperities of Northern Israel in his day. Probably he was accustomed to visit the various cities within journeying distance of his home. Hebron, Bethlehem and Jerusalem were not far away. Perhaps he would go as far as Gath, down on the Philistine plain. And the border line between Israel and Judah was so movable and indistinct that it was easy to cross the frontier into the region of such market cities as Bethel and Samaria.

What he saw in these places aroused his anxiety and anger. To be sure he belonged to Judah. But in the ancient covenants of Israel the people of north and south were regarded as a unity. As he saw the growing wealth of these prosperous cities, the deepening chasm between the rich and the poor, the light and superficial esteem in which religion was regarded, the ineffectiveness of ritual to safeguard moral values, and the mercenary character of priests and prophets of the popular cult, his soul was stirred within him.

Whether he made a special journey from Tekoa to Bethel in order to preach his message of divine wrath and the necessity for repentance, or whether he used the opportunities offered by his market activities gradually to gain attention as a messenger of God, we cannot tell. But it is apparent that Amos' conception of the righteousness of Jehovah in contrast with what he saw about him of

the flippant, unsocial and dishonest life the people were leading, roused him with the passion of utterance and furnished him with a message from God. This experience which opened his eyes to the real need of his time he regarded as his divine call to the prophetic office. And he insisted that one who came through such an experience could no more evade the task of preaching than one who heard the roar of a lion could remain unafraid (Amos 3:8).

So Amos began to preach on the streets of Bethel, and perhaps of Samaria as well. And in the book which bears his name we are the possessors of some of his messages. How long he stayed we do not know. Tradition pointed out his grave in Tekoa. Was the book the product of Amos' own hand, the effort to reach a wider audience with the truths he was attempting to preach; or was it the work of those in the close circle of his ministry, the disciples and helpers whom he gathered about him? We do not know. But in this book we have the first direct record of the preaching of any prophet in Israel. Reference is made in 2 Kings 14:25 to a certain prophet Jonah, who was active in the reign of Jeroboam II, and may therefore have been a contemporary of Amos. But of his message we have no other account. The Book of Amos is our first literary monument of the prophetic order, and is therefore one of the earliest books of the Old Testament, in the form in which the collection has come down to us.

THE SINS OF THE NATIONS.

In spite of the fragmentary records of Amos' activity we are fortunate in possessing in this book so clear a picture of the times and so competent a disclosure of his own prophetic method. In the first two chapters, which constitute the present study, the manner of the prophet is made very clear. He first wins the attention of his audience by commenting on the sins and the approaching punishment of those neighboring nations, against which

the animosity of the Israelites was most likely to flame. Five of these neighboring people are passed in review, with vivid descriptions of the crimes for which they are to receive punishment. Such an arraignment could not fail to gain the closest attention of any company of Israelites. It was then comparatively easy for the prophet to pass over to Judah and Israel, his own people, and make clear the transgressions for which they too must suffer.

The first verse of the prophecy is a sort of editorial introduction. Its reference to the king of Judah before it mentions the reigning king of Israel, would suggest that the book was prepared for its place in the prophetic collection by a southern or Judean editor.

After the manner of the Hebrew writers, who possessed no competent scheme of chronology, the date of the utterances is given as "two years before the earthquake." Of course, nothing is known of that particular convulsion, unless it is to be identified with the one mentioned by Isaiah in 5:25. And in a land where there were so many earthquakes, the notation is ambiguous.

Then comes the central text of the prophecy. The second verse contains the burden of what Amos was always saying. His was a message of warning and of judgment. Jerusalem was the place where Amos felt that the worship was carried on with greater fidelity than elsewhere. Or it may be that this verse also was added by the Judean editor as the statement of the substance of what the prophet used to say.

Then there follows that wonderful description of the fate which is about to fall upon the five neighboring nations of Syria, Philistia, Phoenicia, Edom, Ammon and Moab (Amos 1:1-2:3). The form of these little oracles is constant and regular. After the manner of the wisdom writers, as seen in the Book of Proverbs, there is that suggestive method of augmentation "for three transgressions. . . yea for four," by which the prophet insists that the sins of the people of these coun-

tries are many. But he has in mind one particular sin in each case, which is the ground of his condemnation.

Damascus is rebuked for its cruel treatment of the people of Gilead, when they were subjected to the horrible barbarities of war. The people of Gaza are rebuked for raiding a district and capturing its people to sell them to the Edomites, who were the slave-traders of the time. The Edomites are condemned for their unfraternal conduct toward Judah, their brother-people, against whom they were perpetually and fiercely at war. The Ammonites are rebuked for their cruel method of gaining new territory by the massacre of helpless clans. And the Moabites are denounced for the sacrilegious crime of destroying the body of a royal enemy, the king of Edom, who was killed in battle.

In each one of these cases the punishment promised is to be thoroughgoing and disciplinary. The destruction of either the capital or the leading city in each case is announced. The student could easily make a common form for these little oracles, leaving out the proper names and the particular items mentioned, and it would be the same in all cases.

It will not fail to strike the reader that in each of the instances mentioned thus far the prophet is denouncing a foreign nation for a crime that may be called a crime against humanity. It requires no special prophet from God to make people aware of the sin of such atrocious and inhuman forms of conduct as those here mentioned. And yet Israel itself had practiced just such cruelties in earlier days without a thought of their horror. In fact, David himself was as merciless in war as any of the tribes here condemned. This is another of the interesting instances of the gradual elevation of prophetic ideals through the centuries.

But a more important principle is observable. Israel for the most part still held the view that each of the nations possessed its own god. Beyond the territories

of Canaan it was not usually supposed that Jehovah exercised any authority. In Amos there is given the first definite statement of the world-wide rule of Jehovah, which carries with it the argument that the gods of the nations around are only creatures of the imagination. The principle of monotheism, here so boldly advanced, required many centuries for its complete acceptance in Israel.

THE SINS OF ISRAEL.

Turning from these neighboring peoples, the prophet comes home to his own nation with a momentum and rebuke the more convincing because of what has already been uttered (Amos 2:4-16). If God punishes foreign nations who have had no special knowledge of his will, how much more shall he require at the hands of his own people the expiation of sins against light!

It is to be noted that whereas in the former cases only a single representative error was denounced, in the cases of Judah and Israel a fuller statement is made, indicating that the prophet could well produce a catalogue of such popular transgressions. More than this, the sins which he charges against Judah and Israel are not those of the common and ordinary level, against the decencies of life; but are such as a people instructed in righteousness should have been incapable of exhibiting. Israel had therefore sinned against its divine opportunities. Receiving an education which no other people had possessed, it had forgotten the claims of God upon it and had deliberately gone wrong. Other nations had perished in their sins, but Israel might have been expected to give a fairer account of its life.

But in defiance of these very instructions it had attempted to silence its prophets, to debauch its men of holy life, and to deliver itself over to immorality and injustice. Only destruction could follow such a course. And thus the prophet brings to a close his first arraignment.

ment of the nation, with the promise of swift calamity in which neither military strength nor the courage of experience could avail.

XVI.

THE MORAL PROGRAM OF AMOS.

Text for Special Study, Amos 5.

AMOS' CHARGES AGAINST ISRAEL.

AS it was noted in the last chapter, the feeling of Israel at the time Amos appeared, about 750 B. C., was one of confidence in the character of its religion, and assurance that God approved of the conduct of the people. The services at the religious centers, Bethel, Dan, Gilgal and other similar shrines, were elaborate. The company of priests was numerous; the prophets of the popular sort were active; and a general spirit of optimism and expectancy prevailed.

The voice of Amos must have brought a rude awakening to such of the more attentive spirits as he enlisted in his campaign. It was his purpose to arouse the nation to a consideration of ethical and religious values such as it had not hitherto recognized. Against the sentiment of satisfaction and confidence Amos threw himself with determination to break down the trust of the people in the formal type of religion, which too easily satisfied them.

It was the common feeling of the time that Jehovah was pleased with their rites and services. He had chosen them, they thought, to be his own people. He would therefore accept their offerings with satisfaction, and if they erred, he would make allowances for their shortcomings. But Amos denounced all this assurance. Speaking in the name of God he said, "You only have I known among all the peoples of the earth; but for this very

reason I will punish you for the sins you have committed. The other nations did not understand. They had only gods of wood and stone to serve. But you know the truth, and therefore I will judge you for your failure to make it the rule of your lives."

"The Day of the Lord" was a frequent expression in the mouth of the nation. It meant the time of God's arousal in behalf of his people, and his destruction of their enemies. But with Amos the phrase had a more sinister meaning. It was the time when God would judge Israel itself for its failures as the instrument of his purpose in the world. The sins of the neighboring nations were those of blindness and self-indulgence. But Israel was unmindful of the higher order of religious instruction, and hated both prophet and sage when its evil actions were denounced (5:10).

Violence and robbery were common practices (3:10, 6:12). Luxury such as their ancestors had never imagined had become common among them (3:12, 15; 6:1, 3). Dishonesty in the ordinary transactions of life led to sharp practice and the meanest of cheating (8:5, 6). The injustice of the courts and the ruling classes made the poor man's life a burden (5:7, 11, 12).

With unsparing severity Amos denounced the women of Israel, not because all of them were corrupt, but because in every nation women create the standard of moral character, and above the level of their conduct, manhood does not easily rise. Amos felt that the distresses under which the poor suffered were in many instances due to the extravagance and love of luxury on the part of the women. These women might be of excellent character, and even sympathetic in disposition; but the result of their failure to appreciate the cost of their social vanities led to nameless sufferings on the part of those beneath them, the victims of the cruel oppression of their husbands (4:1-3).

For the most part, Amos seemed largely indifferent to the worship of the images at the shrines. Perhaps his

unconcern or contempt regarding these representations of deity was due to his deeper interest in morality and civic virtue. But the tendency to worship other gods was noted in some of his utterances, and met with stern reprobation (5:26, 6:13, 8:14).

INEFFECTIVENESS OF POPULAR RELIGION.

To the astonishment of all, this stern preacher from the South made it clear that he had no use for the popular and formal religion of the times. He indignantly denied that he belonged to the ordinary prophetic order, or was a member of any of the schools of the prophets (7:14). This utterance is significant as pointing to the decline of that great order of men which had been organized by Samuel and brought to efficiency under Elijah and Elisha. Its decline must have been due to the same causes which make necessary the exercise of ceaseless vigilance lest religious education decline to the lower levels of professionalism and self-interest.

In ironical words the prophet summoned the people to the sanctuaries for the performance of their stated religious duties, but with the scornful affirmation that it was but to multiply transgressions (4:4, 5). He insisted that resort to such sanctuaries as Bethel, Gilgal and Beersheba was not to be compared with a simple and humble obedience to God (5:4, 6). Of the common forms of worship he spoke in the strongest terms of disapproval. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the meal offerings of your fat beasts" (5:21, 22). He pointed out significantly the fact that at the very moment they were making their offerings at the sanctuaries they were in reality wishing the day of the new moon and the Sabbath past, in order that they might go on with their money-making, which was too frequently practiced in utter disregard of decency or honor (8:5, 6).

Amos shared with Hosea and Jeremiah the conviction that in the wilderness, on the way from Egypt, God never demanded of his people burnt offerings and sacrifices, and that for them to make such external and contemptible things the substitutes for right living and holiness was an insult not to be forgiven (5:25; cf. Hosea 6:6; Jeremiah 7:22, 23; Psalm 40:6; 51:16).

A PROPHETIC SERMON.

There is perhaps no better illustration of the variety, force and value of Amos' preaching than is to be found in chapter five, which constitutes the text for special study in the present chapter. Imagine the prophet standing in some public place in the sacred city of Bethel, or on the streets of Samaria. He speaks to the crowd gathered about him. He laments the degradation into which Israel has fallen, in spite of the popular feeling of confidence. A future black with disaster impends. It is of no avail that they seek God in their conventional and worthless rites. They must seek him with humility and repentance, lest he break forth upon them in anger.

For the God with whom they must deal is the Lord of the universe, whose glory is unspeakably great (cf. 4:13). But what is the popular feeling regarding the prophets who really speak in the name of God? It is one of disapproval. Men want to be free to trample on the poor and amass fortunes, that they may build luxurious homes. They have no regard for popular rights, but accept bribes and deprive the unfortunate of their privileges.

With a conclusive "therefore," which sums up the prophet's announcement of future trouble, he paints the picture of the coming tribulation, when the Assyrians, whom he well foresees to be the instruments of Israel's humiliation, shall devastate the land. That "Day of the Lord" which Israel had imagined would be its time of prosperity and victory over its enemies, would in reality be only a day of trouble and disaster, as if one were to

flee from evils to worse evils, from light to darkness.

With denunciation of the common and formal worship, the earnest exhortation to "let judgment roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream," followed by the sad comment that they had paid homage to foreign gods, the prophet sternly announces the future captivity of the people in the distant Assyria, beyond the regions of Damascus.

AMOS AND AMAZIAH.

It must not be supposed that utterances so much at variance with the popular optimism of the day and the official religion of the Northern Kingdom could pass without protest. The reign of Jeroboam II was in its full tide of prosperity. His royal residence was in the city of Samaria, but no doubt he resided a portion of the year at Bethel, which was a sort of cathedral town or sanctuary, and therefore a place of importance and luxury.

Amos' words of criticism and warning necessarily reflected on the royal policy as well as upon the religious program of the shrines. This fact aroused Amaziah, the chief priest of the temple at Bethel. He sent word to the king that Amos was stirring up trouble in the city by his strictures upon current affairs, and his predictions of disaster upon the royal house. Not content with this indirect thrust at the prophet, he confronted him in person, charging him with disturbance of the peace, and insinuating that Amos had come to Bethel as one of the traveling preachers who went about the country exhorting, and collecting money from the people. Amaziah bade Amos go back to his own land of Judah and do his preaching there.

In hot anger the prophet responded that he did not belong to any professional class, but had come as a simple farmer whose heart the Lord had touched; and he was there to make clear the will of God to the nation. He denounced the priest for his opposition, and predicted

the overthrow of the city, amid disasters that would reduce Amaziah's own family to beggary and infamy.

WARNING AND HOPE.

No part of the little Book of Amos is more attractive than the series of visions presented in chapters seven and eight. These visions set forth the peril about to encompass Israel, and the prophet's earnest effort in behalf of the people. The four little pictures of the locust danger, the conflagration, the plumb-line of justice, and the basket of summer fruit, make clear how anxious was the prophet to bring the people to such repentance and amendment of life as would save them from coming trouble.

Amos had a splendid vision of the world-wide rule of Jehovah. He insisted that all nations were alike dear to God. Ethiopians and Hebrews were equally his care. He had brought up the Philistines from Crete and the Syrians from the East, even as he had conducted Israel out of Egypt. He would sift Israel like grain, but none should be lost.

Thus with warnings of famine, drought, blight and locusts, plague and war, and even the nameless terror yet to come (4:6-12), he sought to turn his people from their sins, and to create in them a sense of justice and honor such as God could approve.

The last verses of the book (9:11-15), are written in a tone so hopeful and confident that they have usually been thought to belong to a later and a Judean hand. They point to the restoration of Israel after its period of distress, when the evil shall have been purged out from its life, and the will of God shall once more prevail.

The message of Amos to our own time is not difficult to discern. The sins of his day were those which disgrace our own. His book might have come from the press but yesterday, so full is it of the lessons our own generation ought to hear and heed.

XVII.

THE TRAGEDY OF HOSEA.

Text for Special Study, Hosea 1:1-3:5.

THE DAYS OF HOSEA.

SOMEWHERE in the reign of Jeroboam II, the prophetic work of Amos fell. It was that great king whose success had widened broadly the territories of the kingdom of Israel. The closing period of Jeroboam's reign was one of grave danger for the nation, and only the king's personal influence saved the state from the decline which so rapidly set in after his death. The period following his reign was the time of the decadence and fall of Northern Israel. Only twenty years after the king was buried in 740 B. C., Samaria fell under the conquering assaults of Sargon of Assyria.

The age of Hosea was contemporary with the last days of Jeroboam and the unhappy years that followed. He was the prophet of the decline and fall of Israel, even as Jeremiah was the prophet of the last days of Judah. But the conditions in Israel were worse than those which Jeremiah faced, for though the nation was outwardly prosperous the moral tone of the people was low. The ceremonial of religion went on without cessation at such sanctuaries as Bethel, Gilgal, and Dan, but, as Amos pointed out, religion had no vital hold upon the life of the people. They were content to accept the verdict of priests and popular prophets, that as long as tithes and sacrifices were offered, Jehovah was pleased with their conduct and would assuredly prosper them.

Meantime the worship of the high places degenerated. The cult of the baalim or local gods was supposed to have been exterminated in the drastic reforms of Jehu, but in reality all of its worst features persisted in the high places which abounded in Israel. The feasts which were held in the name of religion were attended by scenes that were scarcely better than orgies. The morals of the people were degraded by licentious and vicious practices that were countenanced by the religious leaders. Drunkenness and immorality became so common as to attract little attention. And when such conduct received the sanction of religion under the impression that God was pleased with the irresponsible festivities of the people, there was little hope of moral amendment.

THE MAN HOSEA.

The book of the prophet Hosea is the first, because it is the largest, of the so-called "minor prophets." It is divided into two sections. The first three chapters contain the story of the prophet's tragic domestic experience; and the remainder of the book records some of the public messages which he delivered as the most conspicuous preacher and reformer of his day.

He was a younger man than Amos, and whether he ever heard that stern preacher of righteousness on the streets of Bethel or Samaria we do not know. But it is not improbable that he had in some manner come under the influence of the older prophet. He seems to have been a man of culture and perhaps of opulence. It is barely possible that he may have belonged to the priestly order. Or he may have been destined for some public service. At all events he was deeply sensitive to happiness and sorrow, the one man of his generation capable of viewing with deep and sympathetic insight the process of events.

The one experience which had most significance in shaping the character and destiny of Hosea was his marriage to a young woman, Gomer, the daughter of a

certain Diblaim. The story of his domestic life presents many difficulties to the interpreter. Did he, after he became a prophet, and under conviction that he was doing the will of God, marry a woman of the streets, and rear children from this unhappy union? Or is it probable that he at first regarded her at the time of his marriage as the embodiment of those attractions and virtues which a young and high-minded youth would seek in a woman who was to become his companion for life? As will be seen in the sequel, the latter view seems the more convincing. Hosea as a young man did not understand all the influence of the popular religion upon an impressionable woman. No doubt she had become sufficiently familiar with the popular religious practices of her time to understand and enjoy their seductive appeal to a light-hearted and superficial nature. But of all this Hosea was ignorant and unsuspecting.

Time went on, and a child was born, who was named Jezreel. The later significance of the name Hosea was yet to perceive. But already there were signs of trouble in the little family. The woman's interest was not in her home. Other shadows were lurking about; other affections and allurements were striving with those of domestic virtue. When the second child, a daughter, was born, Hosea, conscious already of his wife's indifference to her home responsibilities, named the girl Lo-ruhamah "the uncared-for."

It was not long before the tragedy came to its climax. By the time the third child entered the household, the man had become confident that he no longer possessed the affections or the fidelity of his wife, and the child was given the significant and sinister name Lo-ammi, "not of my people." From this it was but a step to that abandonment of the home by the woman, which left Hosea and his children in solitude and sorrow. She had gone forth with her lover to the vicious life of the gay city. Left in desolation amid the ruins of his deserted home,

this sensitive man of Israel pondered the state of morals among his people which had been the basic cause of his own heart-breaking experience.

THE PROPHETIC CALL.

Hosea was by no means the only man in Israel who had suffered such a disaster. The bonds of marital faithfulness had been loosened by the careless and superficial nature of religion in the land. Indeed, the cultus actually encouraged lax domestic relations and the abandonment of chastity. Many other homes had been broken asunder through the dangerous prevalence of such popular ideas of morality. But Hosea was the one man of his generation who, having suffered, possessed the sensitiveness and the insight to understand the true meaning of his experience.

For he could not fail to perceive the fact that his own sad estate was precisely analogous to that of the God Israel had been called to worship and obey. Had not Jehovah chosen Israel in her youth and beauty to be his wife? Had he not led her with gentle hand through the wilderness, and given her the rich inheritance of a land flowing with milk and honey? Had he not lavished upon her all the blessings of a fertile and gracious inheritance?

And what was her response? She had looked with curiosity after the gods of neighboring lands; she had erected to them altars on every high hill and under every green tree; she had persuaded herself that they were more generous than her own divine husband. She fell under the delusion that their rewards were more immediate and satisfying. She thought they furnished the corn and the wine of her harvests. She was too superficial and void of insight to perceive that all her blessings came from Jehovah, and that he alone was worthy of her love.

And now, precisely as the woman Gomer had left her husband to follow the paramour who had fascinated her, so Israel had abandoned her sincere and unquestioning

faith in God, and fixed her affections upon the baalim. Amos had spoken with indifference or contempt of these other gods, because it seemed incredible to him that Israel could ever take seriously the worship of images or the cult of the local deities. But Hosea, a native of Northern Israel, knew better the actual situation, for he himself had suffered the most grievous of all tragedies through the influence of this false religion upon the woman he loved.

It was out of just such circumstances that he came to awareness regarding his own prophetic duties. If he had suffered the loss of the wife he loved, even so had Jehovah. He was the one man of his generation who, knowing the facts, could speak of them with authority and urgency. Dowered with such a message he felt that no disinclination could restrain him from his prophetic task. Little by little he came to read all of the nation's experiences of apostasy in the light of his own tragic suffering. His prophetic vocabulary is that of a heart-broken and forsaken lover and husband, who still loves, and with deep passion resents the causes that have wrought the disaster. The book is full of vibrant, passionate, pleading, resentful, hopeful and condemnatory words. There is no utterance of prophecy that moves so rapidly backward and forward from hope to despair, from faith to doubt, and from yearning to denunciation as this. All the tender love and passionate anger of Hosea's domestic life seem embodied in these words addressed in the name of God to the people.

THE SLAVE MARKET.

The career of Gomer, the unfaithful wife of Hosea, was not unknown to him in the days that followed her departure from his home. He saw her gradual descent to degradation and infamy upon the streets of the city. At last her lover abandoned her, or took the last desperate recourse which the laws of ancient Israel permitted, and brought her to the slave market to sell her as a common

chattel. Hosea knew of this strange and pathetic phase of her life. He had been pleading with the people to return to the God whom they had betrayed. He had preached to them the pardoning grace of Jehovah, and had assured them that they would be met more than half way upon their return to accept the divine mercy. How could such a message fail to have significance for his own personal problem in a moment of emergency like this?

He went to the slave market and bought back the woman for himself, for fifteen pieces of silver and a homer and a half of barley. He could not restore her to her place of honor and affection in his household, but he could at least offer such shelter and seclusion as would protect her from public shame. And thus the pardoning grace which he had proclaimed as God's free gift to Israel was divinely illustrated in the life of this suffering man, who paid the last debt that love could demand, and hoped against hope that the future might bring him again some remnant of the happiness he had lost.

One cannot read these chapters without a sense of the sublime devotion which Hosea of Samaria must have felt to the woman he had once loved and who had grievously wounded him. And one naturally recalls the words of King Arthur to his unhappy queen, on the night when he took his last farewell at the little convent of Almsbury, before he set his face to fight his last great battle by the western sea.

THE RETROSPECT.

Upon the first reading of the passage which is set for the present study (Hos. 1:1-3:5), the reader will be puzzled to understand how the biblical facts justify the picture presented above. Does not the prophet say that the Lord sent him deliberately to marry a woman of blemished life, and to rear children in that unhappy and unholy estate? How then can we suppose that his experience is capable of a normal and commonplace interpretation such as has been attempted here?

The answer is not easy, and yet principles to which Bible study must evermore lead us may do something to point the way. The Father never leads his children into sin, not even to accomplish the holiest ends. The doctrine that the end justifies the means is believable only in the ranks of Jesuitism. Nor is it easy to believe that a nature so sensitive to ethical values as that of Hosea could have been betrayed by stress of prophetic passion into a loathsome marriage. The psychology of the event and its interpretation by the prophet is fairly clear. It is not difficult to see that Hosea's explanation of his call to the prophetic office was given long years after he had begun his public work. It was his apology or vindication to the people of his boldness in denouncing their sins. By that time he had come to feel that whatever had been the agony of his domestic experience, it had somehow helped him to frame aright his message to the nation. As a Hebrew, unaware of any doctrine of second causes, he would naturally conceive his whole experience as directly ordained of God.

In the light of our knowledge of all prophetic activity, in which so often the unhappy experiences of the men of God were the ground of an appeal to the life of Israel which could not otherwise have been so effective, and in the light of Jesus' interpretation of the Father's character, one is compelled to conclude that the misfortunes of Hosea's life were no part of the purpose of God, but that as always the divine Father was "within the shadow keeping watch above his own," and that as the Man of Nazareth "was made perfect by the things which he suffered," so out of disaster the Man of Samaria was enabled to rise to the responsibilities of prophethood and to form for himself a message of such urgency and authority that it touched the heart of Israel and made itself an age-long appeal to the world.

XVIII.

HOSEA'S MESSAGE TO ISRAEL.

Text for Special Study, Hosea 11, 12.

THE DECLINE OF SAMARIA.

HOSEA was the prophet of the decline and fall of Northern Israel, which came to an end as a political power in 721 B. C., when its capital, Samaria, was captured and destroyed by Sargon of Assyria. Its recent history had been wavering and uncertain. The brilliant reign of Jeroboam II, (781-740 B. C.), was followed by changes so rapid and so disastrous as to portend an early and certain destruction. Within twenty years seven kings reigned in Samaria. Assassinations were frequent. A monarch would be dethroned by one of his courtiers or generals, and the nation plunged afresh into civil war. There was no settled political program. Two parties contended fiercely in the city, the one advocating submission to Assyria, and the other, incited by Egyptian promises, striving for independence. Menehem paid heavy tribute to Assyria, while Pekah came to the throne with a policy of national freedom. Some of the kings were men of character and ability, but for the most part the rulers were the puppets of court intrigue. Hosea points out the scenes of debauchery and blood which took place in the palaces of Samaria (7:3-10; 8:4-10).

The prophet was strongly impressed with the futility of these wavering and vacillating policies. Ephraim, he said, was like a silly dove that turned now to Assyria and now to Egypt for help. Ephraim was a cake not baked.

because there was no thoroughgoing plan of action (5:13; 7:8-11; 8:9).

The leadership of the nation was untrustworthy and vicious. Princes, priests and the professional prophets all used their power for selfish and unholy ends. Not only were the ordinary forms of graft practiced, but these spoilers of the people did not hesitate to rob even on the public highway (4:4-9; 5:10; 6:9).

The sanctuaries like Bethel, Gilgal and Dan, were supported with costly gifts from all classes, and there was a general feeling that everything was safe so long as the ritual was duly performed. Yet to the prophet these shrines were the very centers of iniquity. He warned the people away from them as from places of moral pollution (4:15; 9:15; 12:11). Unlike Amos, who seemed unconcerned and contemptuous in reference to the images and other symbols of the popular worship, Hosea was deeply moved with anger and alarm at this side of the religion. He knew by sad experience what the idol worship meant, with its tendency to sensualism and its disregard of moral integrity. He therefore charged the use of images in the worship with much of the degeneracy of the time.

THE MISSION OF HOSEA.

Conscious of the fact that he represented the higher religion of Israel in a day when it stood in deadly danger of decline and extinction, the prophet proclaimed his unalterable antagonism to the popular tendencies in church and state. The predictions of Amos, his great predecessor, were already coming true. During the successful reign of Jeroboam II, the people might well insist that Amos had falsely warned them of impending danger, for what could be greater than the strength and success of the nation? Now, however, all was changing. Hosea's active ministry lay in the period of decline when the state was slipping rapidly downward to the abyss.

The intrigues and assassinations at the court were the tokens of an incurable weakness in public affairs (4:1,

2; 7:1, 2). With figures taken from the work of a baker, near whose shop the prophet may have lived, he refers again and again to the constant revels of the court and the scenes of debauchery which only tarried while jaded human nature was revived to plunge into fresh excesses (7:4-7).

The terrible experience through which Hosea had gone gave him sufficient awareness regarding the deadly character of the religion of the shrines. It was not only unfaithfulness to God which he described by the new word "adultery," for the first time employed in the vocabulary of religion, but the actual tendency of such practices as those of the cultus was to loosen the bonds of domestic fidelity, and to encourage an immorality that to Hosea's stern and sensitive mind was nothing less than an image of horror. Words fail him as he attempts to show how the lax principles of his day issued logically in the terrible profligacy that had degraded and ruined so much of Israel's manhood and womanhood (4:10-14; 5:3, 4; 9:1, 10).

To maintain this attitude of protest was a dangerous and unhappy duty. Like Jeremiah in later times, he found that the people were inclined to follow the popular and smooth-spoken preachers of the day rather than one who denounced their sin and attempted to stir their consciences. He complained of their attitude of opposition toward his work (9:7, 8). To them he seemed like a pessimistic misanthrope, a half-mad fanatic, who labored incessantly to repress the happier side of life. They claimed to be on easy terms with God, and were confident of his favor (8:2). But the prophet knew that they were only building on unsubstantial foundations. It was his mission to enlighten the people by showing them what God really wanted, and how they were misled by the men who pretended to speak in his name.

Even common honesty in business dealings was outraged by the eager and avaricious traffickers. They did not hesitate to cheat in weights and measures (12:17),

and the darker crimes of the day, taking their impulse from the court itself, filtered down to the common classes of the population (4:1, 2; 7:1, 2).

In opposition to all this it was the insistent purpose of Hosea to proclaim the divine will and to show that God had no interest in the mere externals of religious observance, but only in right conduct and good will. An utterance of Hosea's which Jesus loved to quote sets forth this great truth, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (6:6). There was no virtue, the prophet taught, in any formal expression of religion, unless it was informed by genuine piety and the spirit of honest citizenship (8:13).

THE PROPHET'S EMOTION.

One of the singular features of Hosea's message is its rapid changes of tone. He was so deeply sensitive to his own tragic experience and to the similar abandonment of Jehovah by Israel that his preaching tended always to take the direction of this relationship. His own love of the woman who had dishonored him seems never to have ceased. Yet as he watched the waywardness of the people in their tendency to forsake Jehovah for the other gods he was unable to control his emotion.

At one moment he would speak in the tender words of forgiveness and entreaty, even as he must often have spoken to the woman whom he had loved and whom he sought to win from her unfaithfulness (6:1-3.). Then there would come a mood of despair as he detected in the popular conduct some fresh sign of waywardness or some indication that they preferred their evil way to the good life he interpreted (6:4, 5). In such moments he was filled with a desperate anger, and felt as if he could tear them in pieces, even as he had been furious in the old days when the conduct of his wife was so exasperating and distressing (5:14; 9:13).

Sometimes this denunciation reaches an intensity which seems to leave no possible hope of pardon. In one ter-

rific utterance Hosea cries, speaking for God, "Shall I ransom them from the power of the grave? Shall I redeem them from death? Oh death, where are thy plagues? Oh, grave, where is thy destruction? Repentance shall be hid from my eyes" (13:14). At a moment like this the prophet felt that death was the only possible sequel to such conduct as he was witnessing, and with bitter anger he called aloud for the stroke of death and the plagues of the grave, affirming that never again would the divine and retributive purpose be changed.

Yet the book closes with a loving and winsome appeal, to which apparently the prophet believes there will be a glad response. And thus with the outlook upon a brighter future Hosea ends his message to Israel.

THE FOLLY OF EPHRAIM.

Perhaps no section of this deeply interesting book is more admirably illustrative of Hosea's style and message than the two short chapters which have been chosen as the special study of this section (chapters 11, 12). All the qualities which have been pointed out in the preaching of this great prophet will be discovered here.

Hosea first refers to Israel's experience as a youth when Jehovah called him out of Egypt. But even in that early time the nation was never true to its God. It sacrificed and burned incense to the gods around and did not understand that Jehovah was its only source of strength and its only provider of blessing (1-3).

Because of this disobedience, devastation and exile must fall upon the people. Yet they shall never go back toward Egypt, but rather the Assyrian shall be their master in the days of trouble ahead. All this is because of their refusal to listen to the instructions of God through his prophet. They call upon God, but do not really attend to his wishes (5-7).

Then there is a note of tenderness and compassion, as the prophet cries out in grief, "How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?" It seems impossible that the people he

loves so truly shall be given over to the merciless cruelties of a foreign race. He cannot bear to think of Bethel and Samaria becoming like those cities of the plain, long since blotted out; and even as he thinks of it his mood changes and he returns to something of his warmer and more sympathetic feeling in the assurance that Jehovah will not destroy Ephraim. Rather does he believe that the people will follow after the One whose voice they can so clearly hear, and with humility and confession of sin will return to their true God (8-11).

But what an unsteady and deceitful people it is. Israel pretends one thing and performs another. Judah is as yet faithful, but Israel is filled with conceit and tries to follow out vain and impossible policies of government. The nation was always untrustworthy, even from birth, in spite of those wonderful opportunities which had come to it for culture and wisdom. Only by accepting the higher ideals which Jacob had seen afar in his dream at Bethel and his wrestling at Peniel could the nation achieve its true estate (11:12; 12: 6).

But what was the actual condition? They had forgotten these loftier purposes and had plunged madly into the quest of money. The people had forgotten all moral restraint in their desire to become wealthy.

God could not look with tolerance upon such conduct. They would either have to repent in the humility of a solemn fast or go back to the desert with its rude and primitive life (7-9).

What could God do for such a people that he had not already done? He had given them prophets, visions and parables. Yet look at the sanctuaries like Gilead and Gilgal. Upon places where only the externals of religion were practiced destruction must surely come (10, 11).

The lesson of their patriarch Jacob they had never laid to heart, and Moses, the prophet by whom God led Israel out of Egypt, was no longer revered or followed save in pious platitudes of worship. The sins of Ephraim had

provoked God to anger, and the only future was one of darkness and disaster (12-14).

RESULTS OF HOSEA'S MINISTRY.

It is always of interest to conjecture what the results of Hosea's preaching must have been. That no considerable body of the people turned to better things is shown by the fact that the nation soon came to its end. Perhaps the visible fruit of Hosea's preaching was dishearteningly small. That he gathered about him a group of discerning and sympathetic minds is probable. The fact that the book in which Hosea's experience and messages are enshrined took form and was preserved would point to such a group of believers.

More than this, the frequent references to Judah in this book seem to be less the comments of Hosea himself upon the neighboring nation than the utterances of some prophet of Judah who used Hosea's words at a later time to bring home to the Southern Kingdom a message of warning and encouragement, adding his own references to current events to make his preaching more applicable to his audience. Such passages as 1:7, 1:10-2:1, 4:15-17, 6:11 and 8:14, would seem to be of this character. Particularly interesting are those which warn Judah away from the companionship to Ephraim. "Ephraim is joined to his idols. Let him alone." There was hope still for the southern people, though the day of grace for the Northern Kingdom was past.

The Book of Hosea is a tract for the times, the times of Hosea and the times in which we live. If religion has reached a far higher plane it is still in danger of formalism and legalism; and the sins of society, while not so gross, are not less alarming than those that wasted the life of Samaria. Still must the prophet's voice be lifted against the things that war against the soul, still must he insist upon domestic fidelity and moral uprightness. The book is the first and largest of the minor prophets, and as such, in spite of its forbidding picture of the

prophet's own experience, and its constant portrayal of the degenerate life of Israel, it is one of the most illuminating of all the Old Testament writings. One can rise from a careful study of this book with the feeling that now he knows something of the mystery of sadness which looks out from that hooded face of Hosea's in Sargent's panel of the prophets. It is the sufferer who brings this urgent and persuasive message, and if his words did not avail to save the city he loved, even as Jesus could not save Jerusalem, yet they are words which may well be laid to heart by the generation to which we belong.

XIX.

ISAIAH OF JERUSALEM.

Text for Special Study, Isaiah 6.

THE DAYS OF ISAIAH.

WITH Hosea the prophetic voices of the Northern Kingdom ceased. Hitherto all the great prophets had belonged either to the nation as a whole, or to its northern part. Moses, Samuel and Nathan were national leaders in the broader sense. Ahijah, Elijah, Elisha, Amos and Hosea were all men of northern Israel.

But with Isaiah there came a transfer of prophetic activity from Israel to Judah. The northern preachers ceased, for the kingdom of Israel came to its close in 721 B. C. and only Judah remained. Isaiah began his service as a messenger of God in 739 B. C. and was therefore a contemporary of Hosea. It may be that as a youth he heard some echoes of the preaching of Amos in Bethel. But the most important part of his work fell in the period following the fall of Samaria.

The long and prosperous reign of Uzziah (or Azariah) formed the background of Isaiah's youth. Both kingdoms, Israel and Judah, were enjoying a high degree of prosperity. Jeroboam II in the north widened the boundaries of his rule from Hamath on the north to the Dead Sea on the south. Almost equally successful was Uzziah, the son of Amaziah and grandson of Joash. He found Judah at a low level of strength, and brought it up to the position of a great power, almost equal, for a brilliant moment, to the neighboring and usually superior kingdom of Israel.

The account of Uzziah's reign given in the Second Book of Kings is brief (2 Kings 15:1-7), but the narrative of the Chronicler is much more elaborate (2 Chron. 26). The historical value of Chronicles is much below that of Kings, being written centuries later, and more likely to be influenced by tradition, especially of the priestly sort. But not infrequently it adds features which are of value, and which throw new light on the times.

Thus in reference to Uzziah the Chronicler affirms that he restored the port of Elath, on the Gulf of Akaba, to the possession of Judah; that he was successful in his raids of Philistine territory; that he beat back the Arabs and other tribes of the south; that he was a famous builder, adding much to the fortifications of Jerusalem, and erecting towers in other parts of his kingdom; that he was devoted to farming and stock rearing; and that he greatly increased the numbers, equipment and effectiveness of the army.

The event which clouded all his later years was his leprosy. This dreaded disease was regarded as the stroke of God, a punishment for sin. In Kings no effort is made to give a reason for this affliction. But the Chronicler, with his strong priestly leanings, gives the reader to understand that the malady was due to the king's presumptuous attempt to burn incense in the temple. By the days of the Chronicles the priestly law had so far developed as to forbid any performance of the rites by others than the priests. No recital was more likely to increase the reverence in which the priests were held than one of this sort, which made clear the fact that even a king could not intrude with impunity into the sacred domain of the priests.

That the king was a leper, and as such was compelled to live in solitude, while his son, Jotham, exercised the functions of government, was the chief item of political

significance in the years when Isaiah was growing to manhood.

THE MAN ISAIAH.

The position of Isaiah in the social life of Jerusalem is not stated. It is merely recorded that he was the son of a certain Amoz. An effort has been made to relate him to the royal family of Judah, and all the circumstances point to a high and influential social position in the city. That he had no expectation of becoming a prophet seems clear. He was perhaps expecting to live the life of a courtier or diplomat. That he was a man of some wealth seems not unlikely. He was dowered with great natural gifts and was in possession of such educational advantages as the times afforded.

Isaiah was married, and at the time he began his ministry as a prophet he had a son. Later another son was born to him. His wife is referred to as the prophetess (8:3). The children in this family received names which Isaiah later turned to good account in his preaching (7:3; 8:3).

The advantage which Isaiah enjoyed in his natural gifts, his education and his social position, gave him great influence in the city and the court. He was a notable figure wherever he went. His counsel was prized in affairs of state. He was a speaker of wonderful power. His personality must have been commanding and impressive. It is difficult to imagine a commonplace man wielding the influence which this prophet exerted for the forty years and more of his public work.

For his ministry began in the year of King Uzziah's death (739 B. C.) and continued to the day of Jerusalem's deliverance from the Assyrian forces under Sennacherib (701 B. C.) How much longer he lived and preached is not known. Jewish tradition asserted that he survived

to the days of Manasseh (686-641 B. C.), and was put to death with cruelty by that king.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.

The most casual reading of the book which bears the name of this prophet reveals the fact that all of its earlier utterances are the record of Isaiah's public addresses. The book is not biography nor essays, but sermons. All the characteristics of spoken messages are found in these utterances.

Yet it is clear that the book does not contain all the sermons of the prophet. It is much too small to include the messages of forty years. Nor are any of these sermons given in their complete form. Like the report of the sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) or of Paul at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13), it is probable that these were outlines, notes or briefs preserved. Yet enough is given to furnish a fairly clear idea of the prophet's thought.

Again, the sermons in the book do not appear in regular order. Even a casual reading will convince the reader that they have been assembled with little regard to chronological sequence. This probably was thought to be of small moment. It is not difficult, however, to rearrange them in a more satisfactory order, by the help of their political and social references. Such a reconstruction has now been accomplished by most biblical students, and with a fair degree of unanimity, and its details are to be found in almost any modern introduction or commentary. (See the literature cited for this chapter at the end of the volume.)

But another feature requires attention as well. Who wrote the book? Did Isaiah write down in brief form the things he had uttered? If so, for what purpose? It could not have been his aim to reach future generations with these words, for his purpose lay in the effort to instruct and inspire the people of his own day. Did his disciples write down the words of their master, even

as some of the apostles wrote memoirs of the Lord? We know that Isaiah had such an inner group of hearers and helpers, to whom he spoke when the multitude would not listen (8:16, 17). Did these men preserve the messages of the prophet, and perhaps later on gather them into the volume as we have it?

If so, and the different sermons of the long ministry of Isaiah were recorded at different times, and at length gathered into a collection, how can we be sure that the utterances are all those of Isaiah, and that the messages and writings of other prophets have not been mingled to some extent with the original Isaian material? The answer is, of course, that we cannot be sure. In fact it is highly probable that some sections of the book as we have it are not the work of this prophet at all. Such portions of the volume as chapters 13, 14, 24-27, 34, 35 and 40-66 have come to be regarded as the work of other hands. And this decision is reached upon the same grounds as those by which the genuine messages of the prophet are vindicated. Some of these fragments, especially chapters 40-66, will be considered in a later chapter of this work.

THE CALL OF ISAIAH.

It is clear that the experience recorded in the sixth chapter is the earliest prophetic message of the book. It may not have been recorded, or even told, for years after his active work began. But it reveals the manner in which he first came to embrace the prophetic work. Perhaps Isaiah's reason for telling this experience was the popular demand for his credentials as a teacher sent from God, and his authority to proclaim to the men of his time their duty and danger. We know that Jesus and the apostles were challenged to show by what right they spoke as they did.

The entire chapter needs to be studied with care. Was it a dream of the night, or a waking vision, or a parable constructed by the prophet to make clear to others the

steps in his spiritual awakening? Whatever be its basis, it is one of the most impressive sections in the story of prophetic work. More than this, it makes clear the process of prophetic preparation in that age and every age.

In some mysterious and sacred place, perhaps the temple itself, into which Isaiah had never before looked, he saw a lofty throne on which was seated the divine form. Above and on either side a chorus of seraphim chanted the holiness of God. The building trembled at the sound, and smoke arose. Filled with terror at this sight, the young man cried out in despair, conscious of sins which before had seemed of no importance. But one of the seraphim brought him assurance of pardon by touching his lips with a burning stone from the altar.

The vision of holiness thus melted into the vision of sin, and this into the thrilling joy of pardon. At that moment Isaiah became aware of the divine inquiry for one to go to Judah with a message from God. The nation needed warning and exhortation. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us" was the question. And though there was no angelic response, for no one coveted the ungracious task, and no one trained in the schools of the prophets made answer, Isaiah, awakened by the sense of the divine holiness, his own sin and the pardoning grace of God, cried, "Here am I, send me!" Never before had he been attracted to such a work. All his training and prospects had pointed elsewhere. But the vision of the holy ideal and the sad reality fired him to consecrate himself to a ministry of life-long labor for the welfare of his people.

He was not left to imagine that this task would be easy. From the first he was warned that the effect of his preaching would seem to be the hardening of hearts and the deafening of ears against the truth. And when he wondered how long that condition would continue, he was told that only calamity could avail to bring the nation to repentance. Assyrian invasion, the hand of war, the

devastation' of the land, and the tragedy of captivity would all work their part as agents in the discipline of the nation. Only a remnant should remain. But that remnant should be the root of the true nation, the nucleus from which the glorious future might be expected.

Thus Isaiah was called to his prophetic task. It became the absorbing passion of his life. To court and to people he proclaimed the lessons of sin and righteousness and judgment as one who spoke with God and was prepared to speak for God.

THE MESSAGE OF ISAIAH.

For forty years this great prophet proclaimed the ethical and religious ideals made clear in the vision. In all that time he ceased not to bear witness to the four great truths which formed the basis of his message. The first of these was the sin of Judah. That sin he pointed out and denounced, as will be seen in other chapters. The second was the impending punishment, the result of Assyrian invasion. The third was the assurance that the nation should not perish, but a remnant should remain to bring in the better time. And the fourth was that glorious future, the Messianic time of prosperity and peace, after chastisement had done its work.

In all of Isaiah's sermons these four ideas emerge. With varying emphasis, but with unfailing insistence, they are kept in view. Nor did he hesitate to give vivid illustrations of his meaning. His children were given names which bore direct relation to his great ideas. The older, "Shear-jashub," ("the remnant shall return"), stood for the third of his theses, and the younger, "Maher-shalal-hash-baz," ("haste booty, speed prey"), for the destruction so soon to fall upon the land. With symbolic acts Isaiah set forth the meaning of his message. At every moment and with every device he gave emphasis to the will of God for his generation.

Thus in an age when Judah was in danger of losing its religious life through the influence of foreign luxuries

and heathen vanities, the prophet was the living conscience of the nation, keeping alive such antagonism to the lower ideals of the time as stirred some in Israel to better things. It is not strange that he became the most notable figure in the prophetic ranks, and that the shadow of his life and influence fell far across the later years.

XX.

ISAIAH AND AHAZ.

Text for Special Study, Isaiah 7.

AHAZ OF JUDAH.

IT will be remembered that Isaiah's call to the prophetic task came in the year that King Uzziah, or Azariah, died (739 B. C.). For several years Jotham, the prince and heir to the throne, had exercised the powers of the sovereign, because of Uzziah's leprosy. The biblical statement that Jotham reigned sixteen years, must cover the entire period of his own rule and his joint sovereignty with his father.

Of his reign little is said, but that little is favorable (2 Kings 15:32-38). To be sure he did not remove the local sanctuaries, where the worship of Jehovah was mingled with heathen rites. But no king of Judah had yet felt it his duty to take so drastic a step. Not till the Deuteronomic reformation in the reign of Josiah, a century later, was such a program of purification carried out with any thoroughness. Jotham built the upper gate of the temple, and otherwise strengthened his capital. In his reign also began the efforts of the two northern kings, Pekah of Samaria, and Rezin of Damascus, to form a triple alliance against the growing power of Assyria. The fact that Jotham was unwilling to enter this confederacy was no doubt due in large measure to the influence of Isaiah, though of the prophet's active work in this period we have no record.

After a short reign as sole king, Jotham died leaving the throne to his son Ahaz. The biblical narrative states

that this prince was twenty years old when he came to the throne and that he reigned sixteen years. However, the latter statement is probably somewhat general, as are many of the chronological data of the Old Testament.

Ahaz was a man of very different type. It may be that the leaders of the anti-prophetic party at the court had impressed the mind of the prince with their views. It was often the case that the opposition party shrewdly planned to make friends with the heir to the throne, and thus prepare the way for their subsequent return to power. At any rate Ahaz almost from the first displayed the spirit of a heathen reactionary. He revived the rites of baalism, restored the high places to their full significance as local shrines, surrounded the temple itself with the images and altars of the obscene nature worship, and even introduced the terrible Phoenician custom of human sacrifice, in which he participated by offering up his own son as a fiery sacrifice. The reaction to heathenism thus seemed complete, and even Isaiah and his friends were powerless to stay the tide of idolatry and immorality which swept over the land (2 Kings 16:1-4).

ISAIAH'S WORDS OF REBUKE.

It is impossible to date the different utterances of the prophet with precision, but it seems highly probable that we have at least two of his most notable sermons from this period. The first is the one contained in chapters two to four. It takes as a text an oracle which is also employed by Micah (4:1-3), and which may therefore have been uttered first by some earlier prophet. In it the ideal condition of Jerusalem is pictured, as the city which shall be exalted above all others, and to which the nations shall come for tidings of the true God. As a result of its world-wide influence, the races of mankind shall exchange the arts and implements of war for those of peace, and the glorious era of happiness shall arrive.

In contrast with this ideal the prophet now turns to the reality (2:5). What he sees about him is very differ-

ent. The land is full of the signs of that heathenism which is most to be feared. Foreign customs prevail. Dependence is placed upon military strength rather than righteousness. From pleading and warning Isaiah turns to threats. He knew too well how rapidly the Assyrian power was growing in the East not to be certain that soon or late its heavy hand would fall on Judah. Already its western conquests were disturbing the politics of the Mediterranean coast-lands. At the close of Uzziah's reign, the very moment at which Isaiah began his preaching, the strong cities of Hamath and Arpad on the northern frontier of Syria had fallen into the grasping hands of the Assyrian king. What would be the next step? Isaiah felt free to use this menace with all his power, for he was certain of its import and he wished to awaken Judah to a sense of her peril.

But he knew that the evils of luxury, idolatry and forgetfulness of God were a greater menace to the nation than any chastisement at Assyrian hands. It was the moral decay of Judah that he dreaded. He would even welcome political disaster if the vitality of the national faith could be preserved. In this he stood heart and soul with all the great prophets who had gone before him. His concern was not for material strength, but for religious conviction and obedience.

So he warned the people that as the result of the present waywardness and disregard of the right, a time of disaster was at hand. Nature and the objects of national pride should suffer (2:12-21). Next, the notable men, the leaders, who were weak and inefficient, should be cut off, so that no one would consent to take the tottering ruin of the state in charge (2:22-3:15). And even the womanhood of the nation should be brought low in sorrow and humiliation because of pride and selfishness (3:16-4:1). No clearer picture of manners and morals could be desired than Isaiah has given in these graphic sections. But the ruin was not to be complete. A rem-

nant purged by suffering, it was promised, would survive, and the future would be glorious.

Similar is the tone of the "Sermon of the Vineyard" (5:1-25; 9:8-10:4; 5:26-30), of which a portion has been misplaced in the compilation of the book, as may be seen by reading it as indicated in the references. Here again the sins of the nation are drawn up as in an indictment, and the disasters already suffered, which should have served as warnings, are followed by the catastrophe which is sure to come.

THE CRISIS OF 734 B. C.

But it is Isaiah's part in the great political emergency of the reign of Ahaz that is of chief interest. Already in the reign of his father Jotham, steps had been taken by Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Syria, to induce Judah to join with them in a compact against their dreaded and threatening foe, Assyria.

But Isaiah saw at once the significance of the crisis. It was impossible that these little states should be able to keep the eastern conqueror long at bay. History had proved that when the Euphrates Valley poured its legions out upon the westlands, there was little value in resistance. The best policy was submission or compromise. If Judah went into the triple alliance she would be preparing the way for her own undoing. It would only be a question of time, when all three of these little kingdoms would fall into the hands of the great king.

On the other hand, if Judah kept herself out of all entanglement, reserving alike her favors and her animosities, she might escape. There was little to tempt the conqueror into the rough and meagre tracts of the south. Unless provoked by opposition, he might leave her unmolested. This was the counsel of the prophet to Jotham, and afterward to Ahaz. The former seems to have acted with wisdom in adopting it.

But when Ahaz saw the preparations made by Pekah and Rezin to compel him to come into the alliance, he

was terrified. In the menace of a danger close at hand he forgot alike the greater foe at a distance and the advice of the prophet. He prepared for war with his two neighbors, and undertook what he must have regarded as a shrewd bit of diplomacy in dealing with the entire situation. He fortified Jerusalem, and sent a costly present to Tiglath-pileser III, the king of Assyria, asking him to come to his assistance in facing his northern foes. This conduct, from the standpoint of any sound judgment, was an act of the greatest folly.

ISAIAH'S POLITICAL PROGRAM.

It was the feeling of the prophets that the nation was always safest when least concerned with the affairs of its neighbors. Israel had never been strong enough to resist the seductive influences of foreign customs, either social or religious. In the present instance these general considerations were reinforced by the particular circumstances, which increased the peril. Isaiah understood only too well the danger which Ahaz faced when, terrified because the two kings of Israel and Syria had leagued themselves against him, he committed a blunder worse than would have been an alliance with them, by putting himself into the power of the Assyrian.

For Isaiah knew that when Tiglath-pileser had overthrown Syria and Israel, the very fact that Judah, which lay just beyond to the south, had been able to send him a rich bribe to assist her against her foes, would convince him that it was worth while to plunder this land as well. And no considerations of league or political friendship would stop him for a moment. His one object was the spoiling of the nations. And Judah, having attracted his notice by her hasty and irrational conduct, must now pay the penalty.

Regarding the opposition of the northern kings the prophet had only a feeling of indifference. Within his strong walls Ahaz might well have defied all that they could do. But with inexcusable errancy of judgment he

had taken the wrong course. The only safe policy, as Isaiah and the earlier prophets had affirmed, was one of non-interference. Isaiah maintained this view until the action of Ahaz in seeking the help of Assyria compelled him to face a new situation—the Assyrian alliance. Henceforth he remained faithful to the new policy, mistaken as he deemed it, and tried to save his sovereigns from the error of revolt.

THE MESSAGE OF THE HOUR.

Meantime, the scene of the present study is laid at the moment when the forces of Pekah and Rezin began to make serious inroads upon the realm of Ahaz (Isa. 7). The king of Syria moved southward with his forces to strike the power of Judah through her territories on the Gulf of Elath, south of the Dead Sea, while Pekah invaded Judah from the north. Ahaz was thoroughly terrified. He was unable to see what appeared so clear to Isaiah, that the invaders could do no serious harm to Jerusalem. To be sure, the rest of the land was unprotected, but the capital was secure. The king made urgent efforts to fortify the city, and especially to divert its water supply from outside the walls to some point within, where it could be used in a siege, and kept from aiding the enemy.

One morning when the king was inspecting the upper pool, from which in later days his son Hezekiah constructed the water tunnel through the rock under the city, Isaiah came out to speak with him, taking with him his son, Shear-jashub, whose very name was significant of the divine deliverance in days to come. Isaiah begged the king not to be troubled about his enemies. What were they more than expiring firebrands? They could not harm him now, if he would but trust in God and in his strong walls. And in a few years at most, less than the seventy years that was the usual measure of extended time, they would both be swept away by the advance of Assyria.

The king listened, but made no response. His conduct was suspicious. Did he have another plan which he was concealing from the prophet? After the interview was over Isaiah was more than ever suspicious. In fact Ahaz had already sent his present to Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria with a request for help. The prophet was too deeply moved by the apprehension of just such a scheme to let the warning rest with the word he had spoken. Later on he sought Ahaz again and begged him to let him prove the truth of what he said by a sign. In the stress of the moment and with such danger involved in a mistake, the prophet felt that he could successfully invoke the power of God to manifest itself in any wonder that would convince the wavering monarch.

But Ahaz, already committed to his course, declined any such test, saying he did not wish to put Jehovah to trial. Then Isaiah's anger broke out in full force. He charged the king with trifling with the divine warnings. And forthwith he uttered one of the most startling of his predictions. A young woman would conceive and bear a son, in times which allowed of but meagre fare. By the time that such a child would reach the age of discernment, the two kings, of whose destruction one prediction had already been made, would be forever removed from power. And the same power from which they were to suffer would visit dire misfortune upon Jerusalem. In fact, said the prophet, times would come, the equal of which in disaster had not been known since the ten tribes turned away from the house of David. Assyria was certain to bring ruin to Judah.

Then Isaiah, in four brief pictures, sketches the devastation that is to come. It will be like a bee-keeper calling his swarms, only Jehovah will call the swarms for chastisement. It will be like the shaving of the hair and beard, in token of disgrace. It will be a time when the land will have only the fewest of flocks and herds and its choicest vineyards will be waste land.

Thus in figurative words, which referred to the shortness of time, Isaiah made his royal hearer comprehend something of that folly which was now beyond repair. Of course the reference to the young woman who would have a son whose youthful years would see the fulfillment of all these predictions, is not to be understood as a personal reference to a particular woman, much less to a virgin birth. The oracle does not bear such a meaning. Rather the prophet affirms that within a time it would take for a young woman to have a son, who would grow to years of comprehension, the whole drama would be played. It is a time measure, signifying six to ten years. Thus more definite and more imminent have the predictions of approaching disaster become.

Nor must the use of this passage in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. 1:22, 23) in attestation of the virgin birth of Jesus mislead any reader regarding the real meaning of the passage. The use of the Old Testament passages as bearing on the life of Jesus is often without the slightest reference to their original meaning, and in accordance with a principle of interpretation which proved its propriety and value in the work of the evangelists.

XXI.

ISAIAH AND HEZEKIAH.

Text for Special Study, Isaiah 1.

THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH.

THE date at which Ahaz died and Hezekiah his son came to the throne is not known with certainty. In fact the chronology of Hezekiah's reign is one of the perplexing problems of Old Testament study. For our purpose the date 715 B. C. may be accepted as a satisfactory beginning of Hezekiah's rule.

He came to the throne in an unhappy time. His father Ahaz had reacted violently against all the prophetic traditions of Judah. The worship of Jehovah had been almost wholly abandoned in its official relation to the state. Idolatry of the most pronounced type had been established by the king. When Ahaz accepted the vassalage under Tiglath-pileser of Assyria he journeyed to Damascus to meet that monarch, and thence sent back to one of his priestly officers the pattern of an altar which he had seen there. This altar was accordingly built and set in the court of the temple, where it displaced the older altar of burnt offering. In many other ways Ahaz showed himself a thorough imitator of the heathen nations about him.

By some fortunate chance of which we do not know, Hezekiah's training seems to have fallen to prophetic hands. He therefore came to the throne with something of Isaiah's spirit and perhaps as an actual pupil of the great prophet. He was not a man of strong character, nor was he consistently hospitable to the prophet's sug-

gestion. But on the whole his temper was excellent and his desire to support the religion of Jehovah was genuine. Gradually under prophetic direction the symbols of the heathen worship were removed. The temple was cleansed and the shrines of the heathen gods were destroyed from the vicinity of Jerusalem.

In the meantime it must be remembered that the Northern Kingdom had fallen under the assaults of the Assyrian power. The alliance made by Ahaz with Tiglath-pileser III quickly brought that conqueror to the chastisement of Pekah and Rezin. Damascus fell in 732 B. C. Samaria continued for ten years longer, but was destroyed in the siege begun by Shalmaneser IV and brought to a completion in 721 B. C. by Sargon. Many of the inhabitants of Samaria were transported to eastern lands, and immigrants from Assyria were imported to fill their places. This resulted in a mixed population on which the later inhabitants of Judah looked with disfavor and disdain.

It is to the credit of Hezekiah and his prophet advisers, the chief of whom was Isaiah, that they felt a certain responsibility for the religious care of this northern and unshepherded people. If the narrative of the Chronicler is to be taken as historically valid, Hezekiah sent invitations to the northern tribes as well as to his own people to come up to Jerusalem for the celebration of a great Passover, which he observed with elaborate rites, lengthening the period of its celebration from seven to fourteen days.

THE INVASION OF SENNACHERIB.

During these years the power of Assyria was growing, especially in its westward advances. It must be remembered that the objective of the Assyrian conquerors was not merely the territory of the coast-land, but rather Egypt, the great antagonist on the Nile. The approaches of Assyria toward the Egyptian frontier were regular and persistent. As already noted, Damascus fell in 732

B. C., and ten years later Northern Israel lay prostrate under Assyrian subjection. Judah had saved herself apparently by her alliance with the Assyrian, made by Ahaz in 734 B. C., but Isaiah never ceased to believe that this alliance was fraught with constant danger, and that all trouble might have been avoided if Ahaz had been content to remain in his capital and let his two belligerent neighbors, Pekah and Rezin, do their worst. But in the circumstances Hezekiah came to the throne with the inheritance of the Assyrian vassalage. Judah had to pay a heavy tribute annually. There was a strong Egyptian party in Judah which was constantly urging the court and the people to throw off the yoke, and to trust to the friendship of Egypt in case Assyria should attempt to reassert its power.

Isaiah, the most conspicuous figure in Jerusalem next to the king, consistently advised adherence to the covenant made with the Assyrians. In this conduct of his there was a certain high inconsistency with his first political policy. In the reign of Ahaz he had opposed the Assyrian alliance with all his power, because he foresaw the dangers in which it would involve Judah. But after the alliance was once made, he urged loyalty to it as the best means of averting trouble and of allowing the inner life of Judah to develop. He was, therefore, strongly allied with the pro-Assyrian party in the city, and was just as definitely opposed to the Egyptian party whose counsels he regarded as the height of folly.

This attribute of his is made clear by his prediction of the early fall of Ashdod in 711 B. C. (Isa. 20). In this message he comments caustically upon the uselessness of relying upon Egyptian help. In the same year he denounced with equal severity the folly of King Hezekiah in entering into friendly relations with the representatives of Merodach-baladan of Babylon, a prince who was attempting to organize an alliance against the Assyrian power (Isa. 39). Isaiah saw clearly the madness of such efforts to throw off the Assyrian yoke.

In spite, however, of all Isaiah's insistence upon loyalty, caution and distrust of Egyptian promises, Hezekiah accepted the counsel of the volatile and restless spirits in his court. The success of his reign seemed unbounded. Everything had been prosperous hitherto. The favor of God appeared to rest upon his rule. He had inaugurated extensive reforms, and removed many of the local shrines where Jehovah was worshiped with half-heathen rites. In the pride of his heart he imagined himself capable of defying the strong power of Assyria. He even dreamed of becoming the head of a great combination of western powers to bid defiance to Assyria, relying upon the assistance of Egypt on the south.

The crisis came in 701 B. C. The refusal of Hezekiah to pay his customary tribute brought the quick response of Assyrian invasion. Sennacherib, who had followed Sargon on the throne of Assyria in 705 B. C., marched rapidly westward and entered Judah by way of Philistine cities which had already fallen into Assyrian hands. It is interesting to read Sennacherib's own account of this invasion. On his cylinders he records the fact that he took forty-six of Hezekiah's cities, carried away 200,150 of Hezekiah's people into captivity, plundered the land of gold, silver and other precious possessions to an almost incredible extent, and shut up Hezekiah the king in his capital, Jerusalem, "like a bird in a cage." There the narrative breaks abruptly off without the customary record of the fall of the capital. The biblical narrative supplies a reason for this in the strange fate that befell the Assyrian army before Jerusalem (Isa. 36, 37).

THE GREAT ARRAIGNMENT.

The opening chapter of the Book of Isaiah is a singularly illuminating commentary upon the condition of Judah at the period of its greatest humiliation. The reason why this chapter was selected as the one with which the prophetic messages of Isaiah were to begin we do not know, but its appropriateness as a picture of national

delinquency and chastisement cannot be questioned. One has only to read these graphic verses to see how fierce has been the devastation, and how directly the suffering through which Judah was passing was attributed by the prophet to the religious and moral failures of the people and their leaders.

After the editorial note contained in verse 1, the prophet opens his arraignment of the nation because of its failure to understand the divine will, in spite of all the instruction received. The Holy One of Israel, Isaiah's favorite name for God, had given them abundant warning, but they had been indifferent. The result was only too pathetic. Revolt and indifference had brought upon them a pitiable overthrow. The nation had become like a wayfarer, beaten and bruised, until there was no spot without its open wound. "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your land strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as if overthrown by strangers" (ver. 7). Zion is left like the small structure erected for the watchmen in the midst of a vineyard. Little is the difference between it and the utter overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah of old.

Then with strong denunciation of reliance upon the ordinances and ceremonies of religion, the prophet condemned the leaders of Jerusalem, calling them "rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah." For the ritual of religion as a substitute for morality, Isaiah had only contempt. To him burnt offerings, processions to the temple, the burning of incense, the observances of the first day of the new month and the Sabbath, the calling together of public meetings, the feasts of the sacred year, were all unspeakably futile and wearisome. He did not mean that they were of no value. Doubtless they had served a purpose in fixing attention upon certain features of religion. But it was the tendency of the time to make them substitutes for a vital relation with God. This is always the danger which confronts a spiritual religion. Dependence upon even the most advisable

forms comes dangerously near the point at which the religious spirit is devitalized, and formalism and legalism creep in.

The prophet cries indignantly that he cannot put up with a solemn assembly coupled with iniquity of heart. God cares nothing for any gifts which men can bring, nor any prayers which they can offer, unless these are the expression of genuine piety and reverence. What he really wants is the cleansing of life from selfishness and unsocial conduct. "Wash you," he says, "make you clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (vs. 16, 17).

A moment's reflection would teach them the fact that sin is not lightly to be washed away. He asks a question, which in our version seems to be a positive statement; in reality it should have precisely the opposite significance. "Think for a moment," he says. "If your sins are as scarlet, shall they become white as snow? If they are red like crimson, can they become as wool? You appear to think so and to treat the whole matter lightly. In reality it is only by sincere obedience that you can gain divine approval. Continuance in your present careless mood means only destruction, and of this destruction I as a prophet of God am warning you."

Then comes a graphic picture of the unholy character of Jerusalem. Corruption and unrighteousness have taken possession of her people. What wonder then that God has brought upon the city its present disaster? Yet these sufferings must not be regarded as the end. They are only a means of cleansing Judah from her defilements. The unrighteous and immoral will be purged away. The signs of idolatry must be totally destroyed. Destruction must precede renovation and revival. The glorious future demands a present of chastisement and suffering. In such words the prophet pictures the present unhappy condition of Jerusalem, surrounded with enemies and

paying the penalty of former transgressions. Only by righteousness and reformation of conduct can safety come.

ISAIAH AS STATESMAN.

During all this troublesome period which saw Judah plunged into such suffering, Isaiah maintained unwavering confidence in the ultimate outcome. His four great theses he gripped with firm tenacity. The nation had sinned, the nation must suffer, a remnant would survive, and the future was to be glorious. A fixed part of this creed was the escape of Jerusalem from her enemies. Through all the difficulties and disasters of this Assyrian period Isaiah kept his faith in that happy outcome. Even when the chiefs of Sennacherib's invading force were demanding the instant and unconditional surrender of the city, Isaiah preserved his calm faith in the inviolable sanctity and safety of the city of God.

Was it political sagacity, or sheer prophetic insight which enabled him to insist again and again that Jerusalem would not fall? When court and king were overwhelmed with the disaster of the siege, Isaiah alone maintained his confidence in the outcome. He had protested against the Assyrian alliance in the days of Ahaz, and had been disregarded. He had counseled loyalty to the Assyrian compact when once it had been made and had protested against Hezekiah's reversion to the Egyptian policy of revolt, and again he had been disregarded. Now, in spite of all, he maintained that Jerusalem would survive and that the present danger was to be only a prelude to a lasting and happy prosperity.

His sheer confidence that Zion as the city of God could not fall into the hands of her enemies was triumphantly vindicated in the sequel. It required unmeasured audacity for its maintenance. It became the basis of a doctrine that wrought great evil in later generations, as Jeremiah discovered; precisely as Paul's doctrine of justification by faith seemed to lend itself to an antinomian disregard

of morals in the teachings of some rash and half-instructed interpreters of the great apostle's message in the New Testament times. But for the period in which Isaiah lived, it was a courageous and magnificent faith, and in its deeper spiritual meaning it is eternally true.

SMITTEN FOES.

Isaiah consistently preached during all this period the fact that the Assyrian was only a rod in the hand of God to chastise the proud and rebellious people of Judah (Isa. 10:5-12:6). Again and again he represented in figurative language the overthrow of the invading army as soon as the discipline of Judah had been accomplished (Isa. 14:24-27; 17:12-14, etc.) It must have been an event of stupendous character which actually realized these confident forecasts. Jerusalem had been invested by Sennacherib, and King Hezekiah to save his capital paid over to the invader an enormous tribute, stripping temple and palace for the purpose. The army was withdrawn and Jerusalem seemed to have escaped.

But rumors of an active alliance with Egypt and the probable coming of an Egyptian force to the north reached the Assyrian at his camp in Lachish, southwest of Jerusalem. Deeming it unwise to leave so strong a city in the path of his retreat, should such become necessary, he sent back to Jerusalem a large force demanding the instant surrender and destruction of the city. The terror and dismay which followed are well depicted in chapter 33, which seems to reflect this situation. Every pledge had been violated by Sennacherib, but Hezekiah and his people were helpless. Nothing but submission remained.

In such a moment and as a last desperate resort the king called upon the prophet for advice and assistance. With a confidence that seems to us nothing less than madness, and yet when viewed in the light of the eternal purpose, the highest proof of Isaiah's penetrating insight and magnificent confidence in God, he asserted that the

Assyrian would never lay hands upon Jerusalem; that he would not shoot an arrow into it nor erect a siege mound against it; but that he would depart to his own country under stress of a divine rebuke.

The sequel seems inexplicable, and yet the biblical narratives are insistent, and the inscriptions of Sennacherib bear out the claim. Some disaster which the biblical writers called a visitation by an "angel of Jehovah" swept over the camp of the Assyrians, devastating it as with the plague according to the narrative. Vast numbers perished, and the remnant took up a hasty retreat to the east. Years later Sennacherib himself perished by assassination, and in this fact the Hebrew chroniclers saw a still further proof of the wrath of God upon his impious project.

In this glorious consummation of his public ministry, Isaiah makes his final appearance on the stage of Old Testament history. How long he survived these events we do not know, but his place in the regard of the nation had been established beyond all question. He was the greatest prophet who had thus far arisen as an interpreter of the divine will. It was not strange that his shadow should fall far down the history as almost the equal of that of Moses in national and religious significance.

XXII.

MICAH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

Text for Special Study, Micah 3.

THE PROPHET MICAH.

AS students of the prophetic activities of ancient Israel it is our misfortune that so little is recorded regarding these great moral leaders of the nation. The books which contain their messages to the people give only the scantiest notes of a biographical nature. We are almost entirely dependent for our knowledge of the greater number of these men upon the allusions made in their sermons to current events. They were by no means concerned to record the story of their own lives. To interpret the will of God to the nation was their supreme task. They cared nothing for the reputation or the honors of literary work, nor even of popular leadership. In consequence, their lives have to be constructed as far as possible out of the scanty materials afforded by the books which bear their names, with an occasional reference in the prophetic records of Samuel or Kings.

This is the case with Micah, whose message to Judah forms the theme of the present chapter. Although he was a contemporary of Isaiah, neither prophet refers to the other, unless we suppose that the quotation found in Isaiah 2:2-4 and in Micah 4:1-3 is taken by one of them from the utterances of the other. More probably, however, it is quoted by both from some earlier oracle. However, there is an interesting reference to Micah, or to a prophet who is mistaken for him, in the utterances of the prophet Jeremiah a century later. When that

prophet's life was threatened in the reign of Jehoia-kim, some of the elders of Israel cited the precedent of Micah, or Micaiah as he is there called, who had prophesied in the days of Hezekiah that Zion would be plowed as a field and Jerusalem would become heaps. The fact that Hezekiah did not resent these words of the prophet Micah seemed to them a sufficient reason for similar tolerance toward Jeremiah (Jer. 26:16-19).

While Isaiah was a man of the city, as all his allusions and figures of speech proclaim, Micah belonged to the country. His home was in Moresheth-gath, a village on the slopes southwest of Jerusalem. As its name implies, this village was not far from the ancient Philistine city of Gath, which by this time had become a possession of Judah. Past the town there ran some of the main roads leading to the Philistine plain and to Egypt. Micah may well have had opportunity to see the expeditions passing in the raids of the neighboring tribes upon Judah, and even the larger expeditions from Egypt and Assyria as they made their way past the place. To a considerable extent Micah shows acquaintance with the world politics of his day. He knew of the downfall of Samaria, and believed that Jerusalem was only postponing her time of destruction for a few years.

THE SINS OF JUDAH.

Isaiah, the statesman and prophet of Jerusalem, was deeply interested in the political movements of his time, as they bore upon the position of Judah among the nations. He was sensitive to the sins of the different classes in the capital, and held them up to condemnation. But the attitude of Micah was somewhat different. He lived not in the capital, but in a small town in the provinces. He was a man of the people, perhaps a farmer like Amos. At any rate he felt keenly the oppressions under which the men of his own class groaned. The social system of the age seemed to place an irresponsible power in the hands of the landowners and wealthier men. These heads

of the nation, the owners of the large tracts of land, probably lived in the larger cities. From the labor of their tenants and dependents they drew the rich incomes which maintained the proud and luxurious establishments of the capital.

The result was a system of oppression and injustice that ground the people of the lower classes to the last degree. They were stripped of their possessions until it seemed that even their very flesh was torn from their bones. The rich practiced cruel devices to add to their holdings, and gave no thought to the welfare of their dependents (2:1-3). If men of insight protested against such conditions, they only awakened resentment on the part of those they rebuked. Micah felt the sting of this unhappy condition. He insisted that his words would do good to those who were upright in heart, but who could expect the message of a fearless and discerning prophet to be welcome to men so unjust and heartless? The only preachers acceptable to such a generation would be such as spoke smooth and condoning words to the sinners of Judah (2:6-11).

MICAH'S MESSAGE OF WARNING.

Chapter three of this book is perhaps as good an example of Micah's preaching as is afforded in the brief collection of his oracles. He addresses himself to the leaders of the nation, denouncing their cruelty and injustice toward their weaker brethren. Their conduct reminds him of those who with cannibal instincts boil and devour the flesh of their fellow-men (3:1-3). How can such a people as this expect divine protection in the hour of their approaching peril? He has not watched the movement of events without knowing that Assyria is soon to reckon with the nation. That reckoning will be the proof that God can use even a heathen nation as an instrument for the chastisement of his own unrepentant people.

Then he turns to the denunciation of the popular preachers who are interested only in their own profit.

They have no vision or insight. Such men can afford no guidance to the people who depend upon them. They are the false prophets who are preaching the common-places of religion in terms adjusted to an earlier age. They are not willing to pay the price of a present message from God. In contrast with them Micah declares his own competence, as dowered with the spirit of Jehovah and prepared to speak to the people the message that it ought to hear.

The crimes of the selfish priests and prophets of the day make a sombre catalogue. The rulers of the nation pervert justice and disdain honesty. They are building up Jerusalem, but only with mortar mixed with blood. The judges accept bribes and the priests and prophets are intent only on money rewards. Yet such men profess to receive their messages from God and insist that they depend upon him. They deceive the people into confidence that rests only upon false assurances. Then the prophet closes the address with that ringing statement of approaching judgment upon Jerusalem which was quoted in the presence of Jeremiah years afterward, "Therefore, shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest" (3:12).

FUTURE DISASTERS AND BLESSINGS.

Although Isaiah was the greater prophet of the two and wielded a vaster influence over the nation, yet Micah seems to have discerned more definitely the future career of the nation. Isaiah had insisted that Jerusalem would be protected of God and would escape the devastating hand of the Assyrian. Micah looks beyond the present time to fresh dangers in another generation, and predicts, with urgent description of the days to come, the time when Babylon shall receive into captivity the remnant of the people of Judah (4:10). This was a sweep of vision that Isaiah never approached.

But Micah looks even further into the future than the time of the Babylonian captivity. He sees the rise of a Messianic King who, like his predecessors of the royal family of David, shall emerge from Bethlehem and shall lead his people back to prosperity and peace. Then the old contention with Assyria shall be settled forever in Judah's favor, and the era of peace to follow shall realize all the hopes of the greatest optimists of the nation (5:2-15).

CLOSING WORDS.

The last two chapters of the book have a very different tone from the earlier portion, and many have found in this fact the proof that they belong to a later period and another hand. It is possible that they reflect the dark age of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah. Their dominant tone is one of depression, and the writer seems to feel that the only solution of the present difficulty is in waiting for the manifestation of God in a happier day to come.

But in this later and more sombre section there is a passage which is one of the gems of all prophetic utterance. It compresses the essentials of religion into almost their narrowest compass, and approaches nearest of all Old Testament statements to the great declaration of our Lord that religion consists in the love of God and of man. The prophet is undertaking to answer the question which has been so often asked through all the generations, "How can one approach God? With what offerings must one be provided to find acceptance with the Highest? Shall he bring burnt offerings or sacrificial victims? Does the Lord require multitudes of animals for the altar, or store of oil for the sanctuary? Is even a costlier price demanded, the life of one's child as a sacrifice, the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul?" The answer is clear and convincing. It is the answer of a spiritual religion to one of formality. It is the response of prophetic insight to ritualistic obedience. "He hath showed thee,

O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

XXIII.

THE MESSIANIC HOPES OF EARLY ISRAEL.

Text for Special Study, Psalm 2.

THE MESSIANIC HOPE.

THE Hebrew people, whose history and religious experiences are described in the books of the Old Testament, differ from most people of antiquity in the fact that they were ever looking for a future more glorious than their past. It was a common tradition of all oriental nations that in the beginning of time the gods had dwelt with men, and there was a golden age, but that gradually evil crept in, and successive downward steps brought man to a low estate. The future gave little promise of better days. A common representation of this belief was found in the tradition that the age of gold was followed by one of silver, that by one of brass, and that again by an age of iron. Such a view is found also in some of the apocalyptic dreams of Israel, as in one of the visions of the Book of Daniel (Dan. 2:31-33).

But the normal prophetic hope of Israel was of a different sort. It did not fail to recognize the havoc wrought by selfishness and savagery in human life. But it maintained a firm and unwavering trust in the outworking of God's providence for Israel and for the world. It placed its golden age in the future, when the divine purpose would more fully prevail and man's efforts would reach in some measure the divine ideal.

It is the custom of Christian students to speak of this broadening and rising expectation of Israel as the messianic hope. This word "messiah" is not used in the

Old Testament in the specific sense of one chosen to be a divine leader of Israel and of the world, a meaning with which it is invested in the New Testament, in Jewish apocalyptic and in Christian literature. In the first century of the Christian era the word "messiah" had come to have in the Jewish vocabulary a more or less fixed meaning as representing the hero who was to deliver Israel from its political misfortunes and was to become a world ruler and deliverer. This view is only slightly reflected in the Old Testament. It was the development of later Judaism in the period immediately preceding the rise of Christianity.

The messianic hopes of the Old Testament are almost wholly national rather than personal. The word "messiah" is applied not infrequently to the reigning king as being the "anointed" of Jehovah. But it was less of a king or leader that the early generations of Israel thought with expectancy, than of such national prosperity as should realize the ardent desires of the people for the fulfillment of their dreams of permanence and power. Because of the fact that the commonly accepted views of New Testament times regarding the Messiah were so different from those of the Old Testament age, it is worth while to review at this point the expectations of the Hebrew prophets, priests, psalmists and sages up to the point now reached in these studies of the moral leaders of Israel.

ISRAEL'S EARLY PERIOD.

The Book of Genesis is a literary compilation based upon earlier documents, the chief of which were the two prophetic narratives of the southern and northern kingdoms respectively, and the priestly document of the post-exilic age. But though the book as a literary whole comes from a comparatively late date in Hebrew history, it was the purpose of its compilers to reflect as much as possible the early spirit of the nation. For this reason a number of poetical fragments are quoted which are

much earlier in origin than the narratives in which they are imbedded, and they doubtless express ideals and aspirations of generations earlier than those from which they come. A brief summary of some of these fragments as they bear upon national expectations will be helpful.

I. The Ideal of Man (Gen. 1:26-28). This is the description given by the priestly writer of the creation of mankind. It is elevated in conception, and represents humanity as the climax of the creative process, made in the divine image, and fitted to rule over all the orders of life that inhabit the world. The writer looked forward to the complete control of the world by this marvelously dowered being whom God had just created.

II. Victory over Evil (Gen. 3:14, 15.) This passage has usually borne the name of the "protevangelium," or earliest utterance of the Good News. It recognizes the evil wrought by the unwise and unhappy conduct of the first mortals, and the necessity for a long struggle between the evil, designated as the "seed of the serpent," and the good, described as the "seed of the woman." But though the victory is not to be bloodless or easy, it will come at last to the better of the contestants, and right will ultimately prevail.

III. The Presence of God (Gen. 9:25-27). This little oracle, preserving a tradition regarding Noah and his three sons, embodies one supreme conception of the function of the Semitic race. Canaan, the son of Ham, was cursed for irreverence. Japheth on the other hand was to be enlarged by the possession of a numerous posterity. But for Shem, the father of the whole Semitic race, was reserved the peculiar honor of the divine presence; Jehovah is to dwell in the tents of Shem. In this narrative Israel enshrined its tradition of a divine election to service as a prophet to the nations.

IV. The Choice of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3.) In this fine passage, which might well be followed by those which point out the call of Isaac and Jacob to be the children with Abraham of the promise, there is recorded the tradi-

tional Hebrew idea of the limitation of the divine purpose and favor to the children of Abraham, in whom the hopes of the Semitic race, and indeed of all the world, were now gathered. It was this profound faith of the Hebrew in his own destiny as the chosen of God which made his history unique among the nations. The reality of the divine concern for one people more than another may be the ground of legitimate question, but there can be no doubt that the calm and unbending assertion of this unique choice was a permanent asset of the Hebrew religion to the end of the history, and that it was the source of much of that unworldly and trustful pursuit of the ideal which has made the Old Testament the supreme non-Christian literature of the race.

THE HOPES OF THE MOSAIC AGE.

The problem of the literary productions of the Mosaic period is not wholly resolved, though biblical scholarship has determined with a fair degree of accuracy the limitations of that age. But even upon the supposition that most of the writings once attributed to Moses are in reality the work of later generations, it is at least apparent that the historians and law-givers throughout the history delighted to magnify the Mosaic age as the one from which their noblest ideals and most impressive institutes and customs were derived. Therefore, in the summary here presented of the ideals of the Mosaic period it is unnecessary to insist that these various utterances actually derived their origin from so early a time. It is enough to perceive the fact that later generations referred them back to the days of the ideal lawgiver, and delighted to believe that they represented the Mosaic conception of the nation and its purposes.

I. A Royal Nation (Num. 24:17-19). Among the early traditions of Israel was that which related to the effort made by the prophet Balaam to put a spell upon Israel as it was making its way across the boundaries of

Moab toward Canaan. The tradition preserved with enthusiasm the words of oracles believed to have been spoken against his will by this magician from the East, who instead of cursing Israel was compelled to bless it. In this the most notable of the oracles there is given the assurance of a great national career for Israel, who shall completely triumph over the neighboring nations, and shall enjoy the estate of a people safeguarded of God.

II. The National Inheritance (Deut. 32:6-10). Certain final words attributed to the great lawgiver Moses as he was bidding farewell to the nation were cherished through the later history as his expression of confidence in the abiding prosperity of the people he had helped to form. The germ of this passage is found in its affirmation that the different people were given their possessions throughout the world with reference to the place and number of Israel. Therefore Israel might always expect divine protection and success.

III. A Priestly Nation (Ex. 19:3-6.) In this passage there is preserved the tradition of a divine assurance to Moses that Israel would be the special object of Jehovah's care, a nation of priests, a people of holiness and therefore a peculiar treasure to God.

IV. A Line of Prophets (Deut. 18:15-19). But perhaps the most striking of all the promises made to Israel in the early period of its history was one embodied in the Book of Deuteronomy and purporting to come from a moment of divine companionship with Moses. The nation had been terrified at the portents of Mt. Sinai, and had begged, so the traditions affirmed, that they might not again be compelled to face the terrors of storm, earthquake and flame which had heralded the divine approach. It was the promise of God, based upon this pathetic complaint of the nation, that they should receive a line of prophets, to stand from time to time between God and themselves, and thus to speak in behalf of deity to the people who otherwise must perish at the divine presence. Moses assured his countrymen that a prophet would thus

from time to time arise, speaking the divine will as it was required. Nothing could more fully prove the sacred esteem in which Israel was held by its leaders and those who described its history.

V. A Priestly Order (Num. 25: 12, 13). Israel shared with all other nations of antiquity the possession of an order of religious teachers called priests. But Israel was confirmed in the belief that its priests were divinely appointed, and the passage quoted is an expression of this faith in an enduring line of religious teachers.

IDEALS OF THE EARLY MONARCHY.

It will be seen that up to the present point at least there has been no effort on the part of the biblical writers to make the hopes of the nation center in any particular person. Satisfaction has been found thus far in the fact that the nation was in some true sense chosen of God for its high task of witness-bearing in the world, and that its leaders, both prophets and priests, were of divine sanction and authority. With the rise of the monarchy, however, it was natural that these hopes should increasingly center in the Davidic dynasty, and it was inevitable that the period which saw David's family firmly established upon the throne should voice these national and far-reaching expectations.

I. The Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1-10). The prose narrative in which this lyric of the early age is enshrined would indicate that the poem was a personal hymn of thanksgiving uttered by Hannah, the happy mother of Samuel. But a careful reading of the song shows its national, rather than individual, character, as the expression of joyful thanksgiving and confidence in God's leadership of the nation.

II. The Faithful Priesthood (1 Sam. 2:35, 36). When the sons of Eli proved unworthy of their priestly office, there came an oracle describing the transfer of the priestly service to a more faithful and acceptable clan of the tribe of Levi. This oracle emphasized the perma-

nence of the priesthood and its intimate relation to the success and glory of the nation.

III. Davidic Hopes. But the expectations of this period centered in the person and house of David. The passages are too numerous to be more than briefly named, but each of them will repay careful study. The more important of them are as follows: The Covenant with David (2 Sam. 7:1-16); The God of David (Ps. 18:43-50); The Future of David's House (2 Sam. 23:1-7); The Warrior-King (Ps. 110); The Enthroned King (Ps. 2); The Royal Bridegroom (Ps. 45); The Royal Benefactor (Ps. 72); The King in Zion (Ps. 24:7-10).

It must not be supposed that all of these, if any, are utterances that refer to David in person. Doubtless other kings of the Davidic family were the rulers celebrated in several of these royal hymns. Nor is it necessary to relate them, in their present literary form, to so early a period as that of the monarchy. The question of their dates is still undetermined. Yet their significance is derived from the fact that it is David's dynasty that is honored, for he was believed to be the head of a line of kings that could not perish from the earth.

THE ENTHRONED KING.

The second psalm represents as admirably as any utterance of the Old Testament the general messianic hope of the royal period. It is impossible to say to what king it refers. Perhaps to Solomon, or to some later member of the Davidic line.

The situation is fairly clear. The old king is dead. A youth is his successor. Captive nations, conquered by the father's prowess and held in subjection by his authority, seize the moment of the son's coronation to renounce their allegiance, trusting to the weakness of his arm and the disorder that a change of reigns would inevitably bring. The psalm records the folly of such efforts and the certainty of the king's permanent rule. It is in vain that the rulers of the earth plot together against Jehovah

and against his anointed sovereign, the "messiah." God only laughs at such feeble efforts. But if they persist he will ridicule them, and if they go to still further lengths, he will chastise them in his anger. The divine word is, "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." That is final. No power on earth can stand against the will of God.

The king himself now speaks, telling of the royal decree by which Jehovah made known to him his high estate and universal rule. He says that he was assured of God that he should rule over the nations and master them with an iron rod. It is therefore useless for them to revolt. The poem closes with the psalmist's advice to the reluctant nations. There is no safety but in submission. It is better to accept the rule of God and the king whom he has chosen than to invite that wrath which otherwise will soon be awakened; for only those are blessed who put their trust in him.

The meaning of this hymn is simple, and it helps us to understand more fully the reverence in which the higher spirits in ancient Israel came to regard their kings as representatives not only of the Davidic house but the divine rule as well. It is clear that the psalmist idealizes the qualities of the monarch he is celebrating. It is too much to affirm that any of the ruling kings in Palestine ever brought to reality in any full measure the eulogistic terms in which they were addressed. But it is just this ideal quality in these psalms which makes them capable of rendering nobler service as the pictures of that universal kingship which was realized only in Him whose kingdom was not of this world. One must recognize their limitation, as uttered, to the king of whom they spoke. The clear recognition of this fact will make it all the more possible to use them, as the early Christian community used them, as the vehicles of a loftier faith whose object was Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Man and the Son of God.

XXIV.

MESSIANIC HOPES OF THE EARLY PROPHETS.

Text for Special Study, Isaiah 11:1-9.

THE EARLY WRITING PROPHETS.

EARLY members of the prophetic group in Israel are to be divided into two classes: those who are known only through the accounts given of their work in later writings, and those who have left books which bear their names. Of the former the most representative are Moses, Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Elijah and Elisha. That these prophets believed in the future of the nation and had in a certain sense a messianic hope to preach cannot be doubted. Indications of such a view were pointed out in the last chapter. Yet nothing very definite survives of their teaching, and therefore it is only possible to emphasize the fact that national hopes of greatness were entertained by all the moral leaders of Israel, without specific belief in any particular person who was to realize them.

The writing prophets of the early period were Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. The particular messages they left on record have already received consideration in these pages. It is the messianic hopes expressed by them that now fall to be reviewed. Amos and Hosea, as will be recalled, announced their messages in the northern cities of Bethel and Samaria. Isaiah lived in Jerusalem a little later, and his contemporary, Micah, was a citizen of a town in southwestern Palestine. It was natural for these prophets to give expression to their hopes and fears regarding the future of the nation, and though they lived

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in different sections of the land their ideals were much alike. In the work of Amos, however, there is so little that can be regarded as in the least messianic that it seems best to consider only the utterances of the other three prophets.

MESSIANIC HOPES OF HOSEA.

If one were to identify the messianic hope with the expectation that an individual was to arise in the future for the spiritual deliverance of the world, it would be impossible to affirm that Hosea ever had any such expectation. His utterances are wholly concerned with Northern Israel as a state in great peril of destruction. The most he could expect, considering the folly of Israel's rulers and the worldliness of her people, was such a transformation of the nation by repentance and obedience as would merit once more the divine assurance of pardon and prosperity. Hosea expressed the most emphatic condemnation of Israel, mingled with the most pathetic appeals to repentance and reform. The hope he cherished was that God would turn from the fierceness of his anger when the nation showed its repentant spirit. The best illustration is shown in chapter 11:8, 9, which pictures Jehovah's quenchless love for the unworthy people. In this fact alone is there hope for the future. There is no personal deliverer in sight, but the nation may at least trust in the love of God to work out its salvation.

Again in chapter 2:19-23 there is a graphic description of the lover-like concern of Jehovah for the people, in spite of their unfaithfulness and their defection to other gods. The prophet looks forward to a day when fruitfulness shall return to the land, which had almost ceased to yield its harvests because of the unfaithfulness of its people. This in itself is a pledge of good, a kind of messianic hope, though wholly national and without any dependence upon a personal leader.

Finally, the entire fourteenth chapter of Hosea is a beautiful picture of the restoration of Israel to the favor

of God. It is a colloquy between the prophet, the nation and God. It is taken for granted that all unfaithfulness and backsliding are forever past, and that Israel by the help of God may be trusted to work out a future of sincerity and happiness. How little these hopes were realized is shown by the fact that soon after they were uttered the city of Samaria fell under the blows of the Assyrian power, and Israel became a thing of the past, leaving all national hopes and messianic expectations as the inheritance of Judah, the surviving section of the Hebrew people.

ISAIAH'S MESSIANIC HOPES.

The one political situation which formed the background of Isaiah's ministry was the gradual approach of Assyria toward Palestine, with its constant menace of pillage and destruction. Isaiah predicted the downfall of Damascus and saw it accomplished. He foretold the overthrow of Samaria and witnessed its fulfillment. He insisted that Jerusalem should suffer, but should be saved by a wonderful deliverance. It was not strange, therefore, that he should identify whatever national hopes he cherished with the deliverance of his people from the oppressive hand of the great eastern conqueror. He announced to the trembling Ahaz in 734 B. C., that his two northern neighbors who were threatening him with invasion would both be destroyed by Assyria within a few years.

In making this clear the prophet used that very striking figure of speech regarding the child Immanuel (Isa. 7:10-17). A young woman would conceive and bear a son, and in the stress of the times call his name Immanuel, "God be with us." By the time such a child should reach the years of discretion the whole country would be in the hands of the Assyrian king. To many this would sound like a prediction of the virgin birth of Jesus, yet even superficial examination shows that its meaning was local and for the time. It was only in the very general sense in which all Old Testament words were held

by the early Christian community to be applicable to Jesus that they had any New Testament value.

A much more definite prediction of a messianic helper and deliverer is to be found in Isaiah 9:2-7, dating from about the same time. Tiglath-pileser III the Assyrian king was at that moment ravaging the northern sections of Palestine. All Jerusalem was in a panic, fearing his descent southward to the destruction of the capital. Isaiah in the midst of this time of gloom, looked forward to the day when the Assyrian would be driven back and the nation delivered. This happy event he associated with the birth of a marvelous child, whose names and dignities showed him to be a member of the Davidic dynasty and the equal of Tiglath-pileser in all save the love of strife, for he was to be the "Prince of Peace."

That Isaiah actually looked for the coming of such a delivering king there is little doubt. He could conceive of no future crisis in the nation's history greater than that through which they were passing. That the words he used applied in any save the most remote sense to the coming of Jesus cannot be maintained. The deliverance needed was imminent, not remote. No far off appearance of a royal warrior would suffice.

Such a king as Isaiah pictured never arose in Judah. The dynasty of David perished in defeat and gloom. But the prophet's expectation of a glorious future as the result of fidelity to the national purpose did not miscarry, for Israel, though humbled and distressed, was still to afford the means of world deliverance, and in the modern Christian sense of the word these remarkable descriptions of an expected but never arriving king of Israel were fulfilled in spiritual significance in the world-wide ministry of Jesus.

Similar were the hopes of Isaiah for a future of peace and righteousness. It was a theme on which the prophet's mind dwelt continually. He announced that when the terror of Assyrian invasion had passed away, a time of glory and divine companionship would ensue. The best

illustrations of this higher form of messianic hope are seen in Isa. 4:2-6 and 11:1-9. To be sure the prophet did not know when this time would arrive, or what king would fulfill these ideals. But undoubtedly it was to be a ruler of the royal line of David, a "shoot out of the stock of Jesse," on whom the spirit of Jehovah would rest in power. If such a hope was never realized in the literal experiences of Judah, it served at least to keep alive the expectations of that better part whom Isaiah called "the remnant," the enlightened and purified survivors of the days of chastisement and trouble. Ideally these words are always coming true, not in the terms in which the prophet anticipated, but in the truer measure of a world-wide realization of the ideals of the kingdom of heaven.

MICAH'S MESSIANIC HOPE.

This contemporary of Isaiah saw with clearness the coming fate of his people. He had seen too many of the plundering expeditions of Assyria not to know what they portended for Judah. Yet he was confident that there was hope ahead, and even though he saw further into the future than Isaiah and marked the certainty of that national disaster against which the patriotism of Isaiah seemed to protest triumphantly, yet Micah insisted that even that catastrophe would not be the undoing of Israel's career. There was to be a future of deliverance and blessing.

The most graphic of Micah's pictures of national survival is found in chapter 5:2-5. It was the great text quoted by the Jews throughout their history to prove that the messiah was to come from Bethlehem. It was less, however, the prediction that the particular place was significant as the birthplace of Judah's future king, than it was the confident assertion that this king when he came, was to arise from the old Davidic stock, whose place of origin was the little town of Bethlehem. Whenever he came it would be from that historic site, for his origins were from of old, his ancestry was venerable,

even from the days of the ancient kings of Judah. Here the messianic hope already voiced by Isaiah is given definiteness and precision. Judah's enemies are to be swept away by the might of the coming king.

These words, which constitute the central theme of the present chapter, will justify careful consideration. They make clear the fact that through this period of prophetic work in which Israel was almost constantly in peril of her life there remained the unshaken hopes of the moral leaders of the nation that God's purpose could not be defeated by any play of worldly political forces, and that the ideals announced by the prophets for the realization of the divine will among men were destined to be realized.

The value of this beautiful prophecy does not lie in any reference to Bethlehem. That was a mere incident emphasizing the confident belief that Judah's delivering king would be of the royal stock. It is not a mere prediction of the birth of Jesus, nor is it concerned with a particular town. It is the confident affirmation that the plans of God through Israel cannot miscarry.

Another splendid oracle, recorded in Micah 4:1-5 has already received comment as a word used both by Isaiah and Micah, and perhaps quoted by both from an earlier source. It emphasizes in admirable manner the centrality of Zion as the desirable place of all the nations, attracting men from afar to the shrine where the only true God may be worshiped. As the result of such course at the mountain of Jehovah's holiness, war must cease and the nations dwell together in confidence and fraternity.

IDEALS OF THE EARLY PROPHETS.

The student of messianic prophecy will look in vain through these records for personal and specific reference to Jesus. The fault and disaster of too much of the study of prophecy, so-called, has been its concentration of attention upon such expressions in the Old Testament as could by any compulsion be made to bear significance

for the personal experience of Jesus. To be sure there were precedents for his effort. The New Testament church, conscious of the fact that Jesus was the Servant of God in some such sense as Israel had been in the past, did not hesitate to apply to him any and all words of the Old Testament that would in even the most remote manner fit into the fabric of his life. But the New Testament church did not make the mistake of supposing that these words were uttered originally regarding Jesus.

They only claimed that they were "fulfilled" in him, that is, that they came to a new birth, and were filled out with a new meaning in the circle of his sacrificial life. Thus interpreted, no damage was done to the stately and urgent messages of prophets and psalmists. But to make chance words of the Old Testament "predictions" of events in the life of Christ, when manifestly the writers had no thought of anything but local and national events, is to offer an affront to the whole fabric of prophecy as it takes form in the pages of the Old Testament.

The real messianic prophecy is, as already seen, a gradual unfolding of the purpose of God through a national history. It was a clear vision that somewhere in the future the hopes and ideals of the nation would be realized in a time of peace and righteousness in the world. When political perils surrounded Israel it was natural that the messianic hope should take the form of expectancy that a royal deliverer would arise. But this was by no means a persistent feature of the hope. It was of course the most gratifying of all the elements in that hope as the Jews of Jesus' day conceived it, and therein lay the reason for their inability to understand its loftier meanings. They caught only a fragment of the vision, and looked for a king who would realize their desire for deliverance, even as Israel craved a hero in the olden times. But higher by far than this crass political expectation lie the true levels of the messianic hope, and those levels it must be our purpose to reach in the unfolding of these studies.

XXV.

DARK DAYS IN JUDAH.

Text for Special Study, Deuteronomy 12:2-7.

THE REIGN OF MANASSEH.

TO THOSE who watch the career of the great prophet Isaiah through the forty years in which he was the adviser of the kings of Judah it seems difficult to understand how so quickly there could follow a reaction to utter heathenism after his departure. The character of Hezekiah, the last of the three kings who enjoyed the counsel of Isaiah, was excellent. He did much to remove the symbols of idolatry from the provincial places of Judah. He did not always listen to the advice of his prophetic friend, as his revolt against Assyria proved. But he paid dearly for that misadventure, and seems to have held the prophet in sincere regard.

But his son, Manasseh, was of a different sort. From the very first he manifested a determination to undo all the work of his father. He restored the idolatrous shrines throughout the land. He polluted the temple and the vicinity of Jerusalem with images and symbols of the foreign worship. He suppressed as far as possible the practice of religion according to the teachings of the priests and prophets of Jehovah. He persecuted the adherents of the national faith, until the blood of martyrdom flowed freely in Jerusalem. Tradition affirmed that he put to death the aged Isaiah, with torture. It was an age of darkness. The cause of the true faith seemed wholly overthrown (2 Kings 21).

No doubt the policy of Manasseh was popular. The reforms of good rulers like Hezekiah are not always pleasing to the masses. People like free and easy institutions. They are not easily offended by common immorality and vulgarity. The tendency to believe in the advantage of a lax moral tone in a city is still one of the patent evils of the times. And, therefore, though the religious leaders of Judah condemned Manasseh both in their preaching, so far as it was permitted, and in their records of his reign, it is probable that a majority of the people were satisfied with his policy.

PROPHETS AND PRIESTS.

But what were the leaders of the Jehovah worship doing during this dark age? That their public ministries were almost entirely suppressed seems clear from the narrative. Any efforts made in behalf of the national faith were attended with the greatest danger to the faithful. It is not to be supposed that Judah lacked men of the heroic spirit. The fact that Manasseh slew many in his passion to exterminate the religion of the temple proves that there were those who went to death for the sake of the faith they loved.

Yet little headway could be made in a time like this. The chief danger lay in the small shrines outside of Jerusalem. Those "high places," against which Isaiah protested, and which Hezekiah his friend partially destroyed, sprung again into vigorous life during the reign of Manasseh. They were not necessarily heathen shrines. Probably at most of them the old religion of the prophets was practiced and offerings to Jehovah were made. But the lack of supervision left them open to the invasion of heathen ideas and practices. Those forms of nature-worship against which Hosea had protested with indignation were coming in like a flood. The symbols of idolatry and sensualism stood side by side with the altars of Jehovah. Nothing but the suppression of these dangerous

seats of religious practice could safeguard the future of the nation.

Perceiving this fact and knowing that they had no power to oppose successfully the authoritative heathenism of Manasseh's court, the priests and prophets of Jehovah seem to have devised a more effective plan for the education of Judah in days to come. Moses, Israel's traditional lawgiver, was long since dead. The common law embodied in the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20-23, 34) permitted worship at any sacred place. This had been the custom of Israel from the first. It was the practice of the great teachers of the past, including Samuel, David, Elijah and Elisha. Yet here was the seat of the greatest danger which confronted the religion of Jehovah. It was necessary to promulgate a new body of law around the vital principle that religion must be centralized at the temple.

The laws of Israel had hitherto been issued in the name of Moses. His was the only name that could give them validity, though many of those then in use had grown up since his day, after the manner of all custom law. To make the new body of institutes effective it must be issued in his name. Moreover the priests and prophets of the dark age realized that they were only carrying out in the new time the principles for which Moses had stood in the past. If he were alive he would prohibit the provincial worship. If he had given laws permitting it, as the tradition regarding the Mosaic origin of the Book of the Covenant would imply, it was only because he had failed to foresee the dangers of the later time. The only remedy for the evil of the age was to speak in the name of the lawgiver of the past to the present generation, and call it to a new standard of religious practice.

THE BOOK OF THE LAW.

The result of this wise and timely effort on the part of the priests and prophets of this dark age was the production of a new code of law, which gathered up the

institutes of previous centuries, preserving all that was vital in the honored laws of the past, but organizing them into a new body of instruction with specific emphasis upon certain new principles of conduct.

This body of laws was issued in the name of Moses. In it everywhere Moses speaks, not only in those laws which had come down from his time, but in all the institutes which had grown up under his spirit through the history of Israel. It was a Mosaic law in the fullest sense, because it was conceived in the spirit of the great leader and was applied to an emergency with which he would have dealt, as they believed, in precisely the same way.

This body of law is now found in the Book of Deuteronomy, in the section comprising chapters 12-26. A large body of remembrance and tradition concerning the leadership and teachings of Moses was preserved in oral form from the earlier days. Probably some of this was authentic, and in certain instances it is not unlikely that the very words of Moses have come to us in this volume. Later teachers supplied the law thus organized with a historical introduction, woven out of the memories and traditions of Moses' age, and expressed in terms of Moses' own speech. So that the Book of Deuteronomy comes to us today in the literary form of three great public addresses of the revered leader, uttered as he was about to bid his people farewell at the margin of Canaan. No work of the Old Testament is written with greater literary art, or contains elements of more effective moral insight and spiritual uplift. Deuteronomy is a splendid memorial to the national veneration for Moses, and is likewise a monument to the moral elevation of those persecuted prophets and priests of the dark age of Manasseh.

The proofs of the origin of the Deuteronomic law in the days shortly preceding the great reformation of Josiah in 621 B. C. are so numerous and convincing that biblical scholarship increasingly holds the view that this

great document is to be assigned to this period. Moreover it perceives that there was ample justification for the use of the name and authority of Moses by the men who were seeking to save the national faith from utter overthrow.

DEUTERONOMIC IDEALS.

The reader of this great book will observe that it contains a few sections of supreme moment.

I. The Confession (6: 4, 5). This splendid declaration of faith in Jehovah, beginning, "Hear, oh Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," constitutes the "Shema" of the Jewish faith, and is repeated, like the creeds and watchwords of other religions, on all occasions of public and private prayer.

II. The law of the central sanctuary (12: 2-7). This is the embodiment of the law of centralization and will receive consideration in the final section of this chapter.

III. The prohibition of idolatrous symbols (16: 21, 22). Here protest is uttered against those forms of heathenism which were invading the land to its destruction.

IV. The promise of a line of prophets (18: 9-15). Here Moses promises the nation that it is to receive from time to time the service of a prophet whom God will raise up to them, to speak in his name, so that they need not fear the actual presence of deity nor need they consult wizards and magicians. This promise of a line of prophets is one of the most important contributions of Deuteronomy to the national faith.

V. The curses for disobedience (28: 15-21). The code was concluded with a series of blessings and curses so vivid and impressive that they must have gone far to enforce the provisions of the law.

These five sections give only a faint idea of the scope and spirit of this great body of national institutes, but they mark some of its chief features, and may be re-

garded as the leading items in the new formulation of Israel's legislation.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

The second of the five passages already noted embodies the great principle of centralization (Deut. 12:2-7). It strictly enjoins the destruction of shrines which have been inherited or taken over from the other nations. These "high places" on the slopes of the mountains, upon the hills and under the green trees, had been the scenes of much immorality and superstition. The altars were to be thrown down, the stone obelisks, which too frequently had an obscene significance, were to be broken in pieces, and the sacred groves, trees or stakes of wood, which represented the base and sensual elements of the heathen faiths, were to be burned with fire. The images of the local gods wherever found were to be destroyed, and their names obliterated from the land.

In striking contrast with these local shrines there is now promulgated the law of the central sanctuary. To the place which Jehovah chooses out of all the tribes wherein to place his name, there they shall resort. To this central place of worship pilgrimages are to be made. Thither all burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, heave offerings, vows, free-will offerings and first-born of flock and herd are to be brought. There alone the sacrificial feasts shall be eaten. There the Hebrews who wish to honor God shall resort with their households to rejoice in the good will of Jehovah toward them.

Thus there was established, at least so far as these quiet workers of the dark age were able, a body of laws around a new and revolutionary principle, whose tendency was to abolish at one stroke all the local sanctuaries and concentrate worship at Jerusalem. Of course these prophets and priests of Manasseh's day were totally unable to enforce or even to promulgate the law which they had organized. The long reign of that king postponed from time to time the realization of their hopes.

That generation passed away, and still Manasseh ruled. Their dreams of reformation seemed to fade out forever. There was but one thing left for them to do. That was to deposit the sacred roll containing the fruits of their labor, the fresh embodiment of the spirit and teaching of Moses, in the temple. The rites of the sanctuary had not been wholly suppressed. It was the one hope of spiritual religion in the nation. There they left their gift to posterity, trusting that a day would come when it should be found and made the law of the land. Little did they dream how completely their hopes were to be realized in the discovery of the book and its use as the basis of the great reformation of King Josiah, in the year 621 B. C.

XXVI.

NAHUM AND THE FALL OF NINEVEH.

Text for Special Study, Nahum 2:1-13.

JUDAH AND ASSYRIA.

THE entire history of the Hebrew people might be written in terms of their relations, to contemporary people. Those relations usually amounted to such military vassalage as kept the men of Israel in some kind of subjection to their stronger neighbors. At first it was Egypt that was in control; then it was the Philistines who raided their borders and collected tribute. Later still, Syria was the troublesome factor in Israel's politics. But by the middle of the eighth century B. C. Assyria had begun to assert its power in the west, and continued for a century and a half to be the practical master of the western coastland. The inscriptions which refer to Hebrew history assure us of the tribute that was paid from time to time by Hebrew kings to their Assyrian invaders for the purpose of purchasing friendship or averting disaster. Jehu seems to have secured his title to the throne of the Northern Kingdom by payment of tribute to Shalmaneser II in 842 B. C. Menaham sent a large present to the capital of Assyria to uphold his tottering power. Shalmaneser IV, angered at the rebellion of Hosea, besieged Samaria in 624 B. C. and the city fell in the first year of Sargon, 621 B. C.

The ravages of Tiglath-pileser in Palestine brought terror to both Syria and Israel. In 732 Damascus was overcome, and ten years later, as already noted, Samaria fell. Another decade saw Sargon II the master of

Philistia on the southwest coast, and in 601 B. C. Sennacherib was knocking insistently at the gates of Jerusalem. The merciless character of Assyrian warfare kept the weaker nations in constant terror and indignation. The military methods of the Assyrians were inhuman. Their commanders gloried in the cruelty with which they treated subject nations. Nineveh, the opulent capital of this Assyrian empire, was the object of the particular hatred and detestation of the people who had suffered so cruelly at its hands. It was not strange that Judah should share in this animosity and rejoice in every sign of the approaching downfall of the great tyrant. Nothing could give greater satisfaction to the people who had suffered so much at the hands of this conqueror than the news that his capital was about to fall. Even centuries later the memory of Judah's hatred of Nineveh had not died out, when the author of the Book of Jonah made it the background of his urgent message to his countrymen.

DIVINE JUDGMENTS.

Somewhere during the dark reign of Manasseh or the times of reform that followed under Josiah, a prophet in Judah, conscious of the movements in world politics that were bringing Assyria to its end, lifted up his voice in a message of triumph and exultation over the approaching tragedy. This prophet was Nahum the Elkoshite.

Of this man nothing is known save what the book declares. Probably Elkosh was a town in Judah. It has been supposed that it lay somewhere on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. The substance of this message is contained in chapters two and three. Chapter one appears to be a psalm celebrating the judgment of God upon his enemies. It is much mutilated in its present form, but bears traces of having been originally an acrostic. This fact, together with its lack of direct reference to the Assyrian situation has led to the belief

that it was added at a later day to the original book of Nahum, and that it performs the service of a poetical preface to his work.

After the double title, "The Burden of Nineveh. The Book of the Visions of Nahum the Elkoshite," the poem proceeds with the picture of God as an avenger of wrath, visiting punishment upon his enemies, and using the forces of nature as the instruments of his will. Nature withers before his angry approach. The mountains quake, the hills melt, and the earth is in convulsions. None can stand before his anger.

But on the other hand he is a stronghold and a refuge for those who put their trust in him. It is useless for the enemies of his people to imagine success. Whatever enemy rises up against God and his chosen people is certain to be overthrown. But more than this, he will have mercy upon the afflicted of his people, and the yoke of oppression shall be broken from their necks. The enemy of God is to be destroyed and cast into the pit. Joyous tidings are going forth throughout the land of Judah because of the destruction of the oppressor.

IMPENDING FALL OF NINEVEH.

With the beginning of chapter two the real message of Nahum opens. The date at which he uttered this oracle cannot be known with certainty. But there are two very definite points between which it must fall. The first is the capture of Thebes, the capital of Egypt, the "No-amon" of chapter 3:8. Thebes was taken by Assurbanipal in 663 B. C. The other event is the fall of Nineveh itself which occurred in 606 B. C. Since Nahum refers to the first of these events as past and the second as approaching, it is clear that his prophecy falls between the two dates, 663 and 606 B. C. Closer than this it is impossible to come with accuracy, though perhaps 645 B. C. would be a fair conjecture. That would place the prophecy in the last days of Manasseh's reign.

The scene is vividly set forth in chapter two. The city of Nineveh is surrounded by its enemies, the Medes and Babylonians, who later brought it to desolation. The prophet foresees the final struggle of the mighty city. All the preparations for battle are noted. The streets are full of the war chariots and companies of soldiers hurrying from place to place. The soldiers are summoned from their quarters. The assault against the walls is urged. The engines of destruction are hurried to the attack. The waters of the river are diverted from their channel, and the enemies rush in through the river gates. The mighty lady, perhaps the queen, and perhaps the personification of the city itself, is carried away, and her maidens shriek in terror at the catastrophe.

Nineveh the great, famous from of old, has no protectors left. In vain her defenders are bidden to stand. The enemies rush in to seize upon the countless spoil. Her strength is exhausted and in anguish she sinks into despair and ruin. The famous capital that was the stronghold of a lion-like race has passed away. No one could have dreamed that such a fate would overcome so mighty a city. But Jehovah of hosts was her enemy, and she can but perish in his wrath.

THE SIN OF NINEVEH.

The second section of the prophecy proper is found in chapter three, and considers more carefully the causes that are bringing Nineveh to her ruin. What a terrible confusion is that which is now witnessed in the struggle of her final overthrow. The bodies lie in heaps on all the streets. This is only the fitting retribution for the idolatries and immoralities of which Nineveh has been guilty. The nations that were compelled to bow before her shall now see with astonishment the shame of her undoing. In the violence of her overthrow she shall be as much of an astonishment as she was in the splendor of her power.

But there may be skeptics who say that such an overthrow can never come to so mighty a city. Yet they would have said the same thing of Thebes, the great capital of Egypt, whose fall still echoes throughout the world. What city was more wonderfully safeguarded? The Nile was her protection and her sustenance. Ethiopia and Egypt acknowledged her sway. The Lybians and giant races of Africa were her defenders. Yet she was utterly overthrown and her people taken into captivity. Even so shall Nineveh perish, or be compelled to seek for shelter in the day of disaster.

The decline of the Assyrian empire had been gradual but inevitable. Her people trusted too much in her great name and were weakened by luxury and vice. When at last the moment of trouble came she had no strength to resist. Her merchandise was in all the world, but her soldiers were incapable of affording her protection. Her leaders were self-indulgent and worthless, and the final test of her strength found her weak and helpless. Such was the analysis given by Nahum the prophet regarding the causes which led to the destruction of the great city.

THE MESSAGE OF NAHUM.

It will be seen from a careful reading of this little volume of prophecy that the seer is thinking but little of his own people, save as he shares their patriotic hope that their great oppressor may soon fall. There is in his message nothing of that effort which Amos had made to awaken his countrymen to a sense of their peril by the vision of divine judgments upon neighboring offenders. Perhaps the faithful in Judah needed the encouragement of such a prophecy as this in the long days of darkness through which they were passing. Perhaps the prophet thought it sufficient to assure his countrymen of a better time to come, leaving their instruction in righteousness to other teachers.

In the first chapter, which contains the poem there is strong emphasis laid upon the justice and majesty of

Jehovah, the God of Judah, and this is perhaps the strongest of the elements of instruction in the book.

How completely the words of Nahum were fulfilled we know from the records of history. In 606 B. C. the combined forces that had been growing restive under the heavy hand of Assyria were led on by the Babylonians and destroyed it. Its vast extent became a ruin, where our own generation of archeologists has worked with such surprising results. So complete was the ruin of Nineveh that, when centuries later, the ten thousand Greeks whose story was written by Xenophon in the *Anabasis* were on their way past the site, they mistook the mounds of that deserted metropolis for the ruins of ancient Median cities. Thus the words of Nahum had more than come true.

End of Volume I.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX

A

These questions are provided for the use of classes, or as aids to individual study. It is not necessary to employ them in any formal or precise manner, but rather as suggestions. Teacher and student alike are urged to formulate their own reviews of the chapters as fully as possible.

I.

Read the chapter carefully, and also such of the literature cited in Appendix C as you are able to consult; and on the basis of this material prepare your answers.

1. To what nations were the Hebrews related?
2. How would you define the Old Testament?
3. Why have the books in this collection survived while other Hebrew writings have perished?
4. What classes of writings are included in the Old Testament?
5. What three classes of teachers were there among the Hebrews?
6. How did the prophets differ from the priests?
7. In what books are the utterances of the Sages or Wise preserved?
8. What was the character of the bands of prophets in the early period?
9. In what places did the groups of prophets live?
10. What was the "prophesying" of these men?
11. What influence improved the early type of prophetic activity?

12. How did the greater prophets differ from the roving bands of preachers?

13. In what way did they use them?

14. Who were some of the great prophets?

15. What promise was fulfilled in the work of these men?

16. What two kinds of writing did the prophets produce?

Give illustrations of each kind.

17. What did the Jews call these two divisions?

18. Do you believe there is a place in modern times for prophets?

19. Study Isaiah, Chapter 5, and note in it the elements of illustration, rebuke, and warning, which are characteristic of most prophecy, or preaching.

II.

1. In what other nations than Israel were prophets found?

2. What was the business of diviners, and what methods did they employ?

3. How would you describe the character and value of such prophets as those Saul met?

4. Does the Old Testament recognize any cases of true prophecy outside of Israel?

5. What seems to be the meaning of the word "prophet?"

6. What terms were used to describe the character and message of the prophets?

7. To what extent was a prophet free to use his own abilities in his work of preaching?

8. To what extent were the prophets authoritative and infallible teachers?

9. What would you regard as a satisfactory definition of a prophet?

10. What is to be said of the common impression that prophecy is chiefly the prediction of future events?

11. What place did prediction and miracle have in the work of the great prophets?

12. Is it possible to say that the secret of the prophetic success was to be found in their religious genius?

13. What methods did they employ in their work of instruction?

14. How did they illustrate and enforce their messages?

15. What great ideas did they emphasize in their preaching?

16. What qualities did they ascribe to Jehovah?

17. What was the nature of their hope for the future?

18. How was the prophet related to the conditions of his own age?

19. What vocation today corresponds most nearly to that of the prophets in Israel?

20. Do you think there is the same need for prophets today as in the past?

21. Read carefully 1 Sam. 10:1-13, and note its references to the sort of prophets that flourished in ancient Israel. Contrast these men with Samuel.

III.

Read the biblical references cited in this chapter and consult such of the literature as you have before attempting to answer the questions.

1. Who was the first of the great prophets?
2. Where had the Hebrews lived previous to the days of Moses?
3. Name some of the religious customs prevalent among the Hebrews before the age of Moses.
4. What sacred times or seasons were observed by the Hebrews?
5. What was the early Hebrew belief concerning deity?
6. What elements of superiority had the early religion of the Hebrews?
7. From what source did Israel derive its stories of primitive times?
8. What was the value of the narratives regarding Abraham?
9. Is it the historical or the religious elements in these narratives that are of chief concern?
10. What are the sources from which the writers of Exodus drew their material?
11. What was the condition of Israel in Egypt, and what were its causes?
12. What is the biblical account of Moses' birth and infancy?
13. What item does the speech of Stephen (Acts 7) add to the record of Exodus?
14. To what region did Moses go after leaving Egypt?
15. Give an analysis of the contents of Exodus, chapter 3.
16. What sign drew the attention of Moses?
17. What new name for God was revealed, and what is its meaning?

18. What steps were necessary, and what obstacles lay in the way?

19. What qualities do you find most to be admired in the character of Moses?

20. Do you know of other leaders in history who have rendered similar services to their people?

IV.

1. What biblical books contain the narratives of the life of Moses?

2. How did the tradition that Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible originate?

3. What are the four documents which form the basis of the Hexateuch?

4. What qualities did Moses gain as the result of his life in Midian?

5. What did he do on his return to Egypt?

6. Was it reasonable to demand the release of the Hebrews from their work in Egypt?

7. How do you explain the accounts of the plagues?

8. In which direction did the people travel on their departure from Egypt?

9. What occurred when they reached the waters on the eastern frontier?

10. What were some of the lessons taught Israel by the experience of the departure from Egypt?

11. Is it possible that the numbers of the Hebrews who left Egypt have been exaggerated in our records?

12. What significance has the wilderness period in the history of the nation?

13. What relation did Moses sustain to the development of law in Israel?

14. How long were the people in the wilderness?

15. At what place did they spend most of this time?

16. From what direction and through what districts did the people finally approach Canaan?

17. What led to Israel's possession of some of the region east of the Jordan?

18. What proof is there that Moses was really a historical figure?

19. What new elements did Moses contribute to the religion of Israel?

20. Make a list of the important facts mentioned in Deuteronomy 1.

V.

Read the references in the chapter, and study the map of Palestine before attempting to answer the questions.

1. What was the approximate date of Israel's entrance into Canaan?

2. Give the location and some of the main features of Canaan.

3. What made the land so attractive to the desert people?

4. What were some of the races found by the Hebrews in Canaan?

5. How did the land get its two names, Canaan and Palestine?

6. How did the Hebrews compare in strength with the native races of the land?

7. What advantages did Canaan offer the Hebrews?

8. What two records of the occupation do we possess?
9. Does "occupation" or "conquest" best describe the manner of the Hebrew entrance?
10. How long did it take for Israel to attain a normal national life in Palestine?
11. What was the character of the government in the period of the judges?
12. What can be said of the manners of the nation?
13. What judges were most prominent in the records of the period?
14. Is it probable that there were many other local leaders whose names and exploits have not been preserved?
15. What was the state of religion in the days of the judges?
16. Who was the second great prophet of Israel?
17. In what book is the story of Samuel's life contained?
18. Where was Shiloh, and what kind of services were held there?
19. What were the circumstances of Samuel's birth?
20. What was the character of the sons of Eli?
21. What is the bearing of this fact on parental responsibility?
22. How did Samuel become aware of his life work?
23. What disaster brought to an end the worship at Shiloh?

VI.

1. What nations exercised a controlling influence on Israel in the different periods of its history?
2. What part of the country was held by the Philistines? What were the names of their cities?

3. What did Samuel do to save Israel from Philistine oppressions after the battle of Aphek?
4. Why was Saul's leadership a failure?
5. What advantage did David have in his contests with the Philistines?
6. How did David later employ the Philistines?
7. In what brief passage is the work of Samuel best described?
8. What place was the center of Samuel's work?
9. In what places did Samuel hold annual gatherings?
10. What was the nature of these assemblies?
11. What results were attained by Samuel in these gatherings?
12. What view of the choice of a king is presented by the early Judean record?
13. What is the contrasted statement of the later Ephraimite account?
14. In what respect do the reasons given for Saul's rejection seem insufficient? What is the probable explanation?
15. What was the reason for Samuel's commission to Saul against the Amalekites?
16. What was Samuel's great statement in regard to obedience?
17. What elements of strength and of weakness appear in Saul?
18. What was the value of his reign to Israel?
19. What characteristics are most prominent in Samuel?
20. What were the most important services rendered by him to Israel?
22. What bearing has the record of David's life upon the history of prophecy in Israel?

VII.

Read the biblical references in Chapter VII and the literature, as fully as you are able.

1. In what books is the story of David's life contained?
2. How do the two narratives of David's introduction into the official household of Saul compare?
3. What close friendship was formed by David?
4. What elements of David's later character were the result of his friendship with Jonathan?
5. What was Saul's attitude toward David?
6. In what ways did Saul seek to rid himself of David's presence?
7. How is the prophet Samuel connected by David's biographers with the life of their hero?
8. Where did David go when he made his escape from the court of Saul?
9. Of what tragedy was David's visit at the tabernacle at Nob the cause?
10. What kind of a life did David live during the period of his exile?
11. With whom did he at last take refuge?
12. Do you think David was justified in accepting military service among the Philistines?
13. In what great peril was David placed at the time the Philistine hosts marched against Saul?
14. What became of the kingdom of Saul after his death?
15. What events led to David's acceptance of kingship in Judah?
16. How did he become the king of the united nation?
17. Why did he wish to take Jerusalem?
18. What important events connect the lives of Nathan and David?
19. What do you think was the influence of Nathan upon the character of the king?

20. What do you think was the greatest misfortune that ever befell David?

21. What do you regard as the most striking proof of his moral leadership?

VIII.

Read the biblical material, and such of the literature as you can consult.

1. What were some of the difficulties that confronted Solomon on his accession to the throne?

2. How did he meet these emergencies?

3. What important alliance did he make?

4. What were the chief building enterprises of Solomon's reign?

5. Where did he procure the materials for these structures?

6. What were the sources of his wealth?

7. What features of his rule lessened his popularity?

8. Of what political significance were Solomon's many wives?

9. What were the popular features of his reign?

10. With what three men did he have difficulty?

11. What is the picture of Solomon presented in the prophetic narratives?

12. In what regard does it suggest another opinion?

13. What was the nature of Solomon's wisdom?

14. In what respect was he a religious man?

15. What was the actual result of his building of the temple?

16. How were the prophets treated in Solomon's reign?
17. What plan did they adopt to preserve the older faith?
18. What were the real causes of the revolt?
19. What were the relations of Ahijah with Jeroboam?
20. Describe the events of the assembly at Shechem.
21. What was Jeroboam's later attitude toward the prophets?
22. What other prophets are named in this period?

IX.

Be sure to read the biblical material and consult an Old Testament map of Palestine before attempting to answer the questions. Then read the comments, and such helps as you have, in further explanation of them.

1. In what regard were the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in striking contrast?
2. What method is followed in determining the dates of Old Testament events?
3. What were the chief events of Jeroboam's reign?
4. How did Baasha obtain the kingship?
5. Which is the shortest reign in the biblical records?
6. What events led to Omri's rule? What facts can you recall concerning him?
7. What were the chief differences between the worship of Jehovah and that of the baals?
8. What was the relation of Jezebel to the religion of the baals?
9. What were the two policies of government represented respectively by Elijah and Ahab?

10. What are our sources of knowledge regarding Elijah?
11. How do the miracle stories in the life of Elijah compare with the events related of other prophets?
12. Is the value of the record of Elijah's life dependent on the miracles related of him?
13. In what respect was Elijah mistaken?
14. Describe the meeting of Elijah and Ahab.
15. What was Ahab's attitude toward the worship of Jehovah?
16. Would you regard the narrative of the scene at Carmel as descriptive of a single event, or of the entire series of efforts in behalf of the national faith?
17. What was Elijah's question to the people?
18. How did he treat the priests of the baal worship during the contest?
19. What was the result?
20. What did Elijah do with the prophets of the baal worship?
Why?
21. What were the relations of Elijah and Ahab after the test at Carmel?
22. What effect did the message of Jezebel have on Elijah?
23. Do you think the killing of the prophets was right or wrong? Was it wise or not?
24. What did Elijah learn at Mount Horeb?

X.

Read all the Scripture references cited in Chapter X, and as much as you are able of the literature suggested.

1. Why did Elijah desire to change the lines of rulers in Israel and Syria?

2. How was the character of Elijah illustrated in the call of Elisha?

3. Why were Israel and Syria so frequently at war with each other during this period?

4. What was the demand made by the Syrians to which Ahab consented?

5. What led to resistance on the part of Ahab and his people?

6. What idea of Jehovah was held by the Syrians?

7. Why did Ahab extend clemency to Ben-hadad? What did the prophets think of his conduct?

8. Why would not Naboth sell his possession to Ahab?

9. Why was Jezebel less scrupulous in her efforts to secure the property than Ahab?

10. What means did she employ to accomplish her purpose?

11. How did the wrong done to Naboth affect Elijah?

12. Give an outline of the interview between Elijah and Ahab.

13. How did Ahab come to his death?

14. How do you explain the fact that Micaiah gave one prediction regarding the outcome of the battle, while all the other prophets were of another mind?

15. What was the occasion of Ahaziah's message to Ekron?

16. How did Elijah resent the insult to Jehovah?

17. How do you interpret the narratives of Elijah's destruction of the two companies of soldiers by fire?

18. What do you regard as the most important features in the character of Elijah?

19. What were his relations with the sons of the prophets?

20. What do you think is the value of the story of his final departure?

21. In what sense was he "the horses and chariots of Israel"?

XI.

Read the biblical references, and locate on the map the places mentioned in Chapter XI.

1. Is it possible to judge accurately regarding the character of Elisha?

2. What two contrasted elements appear in his life?

3. Where did Elisha live?

4. In the reigns of what kings was he active?

5. What incidents are connected in his life with Jericho and Bethel respectively?

6. What was the cause of the expedition against Moab?

7. Describe the route taken by the allied forces, and the outcome of the campaign.

8. What part did Elisha have in this enterprise?

9. What important biblical monument is connected with this incident?

10. Where was Shunem?

11. What did the family at Shunem provide for Elisha?

12. What misfortune befell the child that was born at the prophet's intercession?

13. What did Elisha do to restore the child?

14. What explanation can you offer to account for this narrative?

15. What are some of the other miracle stories told regarding Elisha?

16. On what basis do you suppose they rested?
17. Would such a character as that of the prophet attract to itself traditions of this nature?
18. Was the real service of Elisha to his times and to religion dependent upon these wonder incidents?
19. What led Naaman, the Syrian, to visit Samaria?
20. Why was the king of Israel alarmed at his coming?
21. In what way was Naaman himself disappointed?
22. What relation was there between his bathing in the Jordan and his recovery from the leprosy?
23. How was the servant of the prophet discovered in his fraudulent attempt to secure a reward?
24. What took place at Dothan, and what light does it throw on Elisha's character?

XII.

1. With what nation was Israel usually at war during this period?
2. What city was the chief sufferer from Syrian invasion?
3. What was the condition of the people during the siege?
4. What remarkable prediction did Elisha make concerning the siege?
5. How was the suffering of Samaria brought to an end?
6. Who brought the news of the Syrian departure?
7. What was the cause of the panic in the Syrian army?
8. Give the details of the visit of Elisha to Damascus, as recorded in the Book of Kings.
9. What difficulties are encountered in connection with this narrative?

10. Why did Elisha resort to the unusual expedient of calling another man to the throne of Israel?

11. What qualities did Jehu possess that led Elisha to consider him the right man for the place?

12. What were the circumstances of Jehu's summons?

13. What measures did he take to insure the success of his efforts to obtain the throne of Israel?

14. What two members of the royal family of Israel did Jehu put to death?

15. Why did he include Ahaziah and the other princes of Judah in his program of extermination?

16. What was the significance of Jezebel's taunt to Jehu, "Thou Zimri"?

17. What message did Jehu send to the officials of Samaria? What was their response?

18. What was the significance of Jehu's friendly meeting with Jehonadab, the son of Rechab?

19. Under what pretext did Jehu secure the attendance of the baal worshipers in Samaria?

20. What summary treatment of them followed?

21. What do you think of the ethics of Jehu's conduct?

22. How did the prophets regard his bloody measures of reform?

23. Do you think the work of Jehu resulted in good or evil to Israel?

24. What was the view of the later prophet Hosea regarding his conduct?

25. Give the incidents of the visit of Joash to the death-bed of Elisha.

26. What would you regard as the contributions of Elisha to the political, social, and religious life of Israel?

XIII.

Read carefully the biblical material, and such of the literature as you have at hand.

1. What evidence have we that there were many prophets in Israel besides those whose names are familiar to us?

2. What was the character of the earliest groups of prophets?

3. What was the relation between these bands of prophets and the greater prophets, like Samuel?

4. In what manner had the groups of prophets grown from the days of Samuel to those of Elijah?

5. What was meant by the title, "Sons of the Prophets"?

6. In what way were the prophets distinguished in appearance?

7. What was the work of the groups of prophets?

8. In what places did the prophets have communities?

9. In what manner are these groups entitled to the name of "schools"?

10. What led to the formation of two separate schools of prophecy in Israel?

11. What two sets of narratives were produced by these groups?

12. Why did they gather and record the narratives of the past?

13. What led to the discovery of these different documents or sources in the opening books of the Old Testament?

14. What are some of the sections of the J document?

15. How does Tatian's "Diatessaron" furnish a parallel to the Hexateuch?

16. What elements are prominent in the teachings of the Judean school?

17. What are their characteristics as regards literary style?

18. What was their probable date?

19. What was their value?
20. What is the significance to us of the story of Jacob's wrestling at Penuel?

XIV.

Answer the questions only after careful study of the material of Chapter XIV, and the biblical references.

1. What was the origin of the prophetic schools in Israel?
2. In which of the two kingdoms had prophecy been most prominent up to this time?
3. From how many sources are the narratives of the earlier portion of the Old Testament drawn?
4. Which of these sources is the subject of the present study?
5. What two characteristics give to the present narrative the name of the E document?
6. How is the northern character of the work made evident?
7. Are these records of the Ephraimite document usually distinct, or are they mingled with those of the southern group?
8. How do the two sources differ in their ethical and religious ideas?
9. With what features were the Ephraimite writers more concerned?
10. What are some of the illustrations of a higher ethical ideal in these writings?
11. What was the probable date of the Ephraimite source?
12. Why is the story of Joseph's last days significant?
13. Why were the brothers of Joseph anxious, after his forgiveness of them?

14. What request did they send to Joseph?
15. How did their words affect him?
16. What generous view did he take of their evil conduct in the past?
17. To what age did Joseph live?
18. What earnest request did he make of his people at his death?

XV.

Read the Book of Amos, and locate on the map the places mentioned.

1. In whose reign did the kingdom of Israel sink to its lowest point?
2. What were the qualities of Jeroboam II as warrior and king?
3. What effect did the activities of Assyria have upon the fortunes of Israel?
4. What was the character of popular worship in Israel?
5. What was the feeling of the people regarding their nation and their religion in the times of Jeroboam II?
6. State what is known of the earlier life of Amos.
7. How was Amos prepared for his work as a prophet?
8. How did he secure opportunities to preach?
9. Where was his message delivered?
10. How did the Book of Amos come to be written?
11. What was Amos' first method of securing the attention of his audience?
12. What nations were condemned by him?
13. Why were these nations chosen as examples of judgment upon sin?

14. For what crimes were these peoples condemned?
15. Had Israel ever been guilty of these crimes?
16. What bearing did these predictions of God's judgment upon neighboring people have on the conception of the extent of God's authority?
17. How do Amos' rebukes of Judah and Israel differ from those directed against the neighboring nations?
18. How had Israel attempted to silence its religious teachers?
19. What did Amos predict as the result of Israel's evil course?

XVI.

Read carefully the Book of Amos, and such of the literature as is accessible to you, and on the basis of this first-hand examination of the material, prepare the answers to the questions.

1. What was the feeling of Israel regarding the character of the popular religion in the days of Amos?
2. In what way did Amos stand opposed to the common ideas of his time?
3. What was his conception of Israel's relation to God?
4. What was his teaching regarding the "Day of the Lord"?
5. What were the sins which Amos most frequently denounced?
6. How do they compare with the outstanding sins of our own day?
7. What was the attitude of Amos toward the worship of images?

8. What did Amos say about his relation to the order of prophets?

9. Did Amos oppose sacrifice and other religious rites in themselves, or merely their substitution for right conduct?

10. What did Amos have to say regarding Israel's worship in the wilderness period?

11. Where were the cities in which the work of Amos was probably performed?

12. How did Amos differ from the people of his day in his conception of God's rule in the world?

13. What changes did Amos exhort the people to undertake?

14. Who was the king, and where was the court at this time?

15. Describe the interview between Amos and Amaziah.

16. Why was Amos angry at the insinuation that he was one of the common prophets?

17. Describe the visions of the Book of Amos.

18. How did Amos regard other nations as compared with Israel?

19. What has been thought regarding the relation of the closing verses of the book to the remainder?

20. What would you regard as the chief values of the message of Amos in our own time?

XVII.

Read the Book of Hosea, and such of the literature as you can.

1. In whose reign did the work of Hosea fall?

2. What events were most conspicuous during the period when Hosea was preaching?

3. What was the character of the worship at the high places?

4. What was the effect of the popular worship upon the morals of Israel?

5. Why is the Book of Hosea among the minor prophets?

6. Was Hosea related in any manner to Amos?

7. What is known of Hosea's position and expectations at the time he began his prophetic work?

8. What was the character of his domestic life during the first years?

9. What differing views may be held regarding the interpretation of Chapters 1-3?

10. What was the course of Hosea's domestic tragedy?

11. What was it that led Hosea to begin the career of a prophet?

12. Why was he especially fitted for such a work?

13. In what way did his experience seem like that of God?

14. How had Israel proved herself an unfaithful wife?

15. What was the effect of the worship of the baals upon the character of Israel?

16. What is the nature of the Book of Hosea as regards its style?

17. What became of Hosea's wife?

18. What final act of sympathy did Hosea perform?

19. What bearing does this conduct of his have upon his character as a man and prophet?

20. How do you explain the fact that the Bible represents Hosea as commanded to marry a woman of impure life?

21. What light do other prophetic experiences and the teachings of Jesus throw upon this problem?

XVIII.

Read Hosea 4-14 with care, and on the basis of a study of the text and the foregoing paragraphs, prepare the answers to these questions.

1. In what period did Hosea live?
2. What was the character of Samaria in its closing days?
3. What were the policies of the two rival parties in the kingdom of Israel?
4. How did Hosea feel regarding the political conduct of his people?
5. What kind of leaders were in power?
6. What was the effect of the shrines upon the religious life of Israel?
7. What events at the court are commented upon by the prophet?
8. What was the attitude of the priests and the other prophets toward Hosea?
9. What did Hosea regard as his mission?
10. What caused the prophet to display so much emotion in his preaching?
11. What different moods does he show in his words?
12. Point out the chief features of Chapters 11 and 12.
13. What use does the Gospel of Matthew make of Hosea's reference to the childhood of Israel (Matt. 2:15)?
14. What threat concerning the future did Hosea constantly repeat?
15. What references does Hosea make to the patriarchs of the nation?
16. What do you imagine was the success of Hosea's work?
17. Why are there so many references to Judah in the book?
18. Why is the Book of Hosea of so much importance?
19. What are the outstanding lessons of the Book of Hosea for our own times?

XIX.

Read carefully the portion of the Book of Isaiah assigned for study, and look up the references in the section. Also consult the literature as fully as possible.

1. In what part of the nation did the earlier prophets perform their work?

2. What transfer of prophetic activity came in Isaiah's day?

3. Were there any prophets in Northern Israel contemporary with Isaiah?

4. What reign formed the background of Isaiah's youth?

5. What two kings were contemporary at this time?

6. In what books is the reign of Uzziah described?

7. Which account, that of Kings or that of Chronicles, is probably the more reliable? Why?

8. What calamity befell the king in his later years?

9. How was this explained by the Chronicles?

10. What is known of Isaiah's position in the social life of his age?

11. How long did the public work of Isaiah last?

12. What relation does the Book of Isaiah bear to the work of the prophet?

13. Is it probable that the book contains some of the writings of other prophets than Isaiah?

14. Why is the sixth chapter to be regarded as the earliest?

15. What were the successive steps of Isaiah's summons to prophetic work?

16. How did Isaiah come to offer himself for the work of preaching?

17. How was he warned of the difficulty of his task?

18. What did Isaiah undertake in his work as prophet?

19. What four ideas did he emphasize?

20. How did he illustrate his messages?

XX.

Read the assigned section of Isaiah and the references. Also consult the literature to which you have access.

1. Explain the circumstances of Jotham's joint and individual reign.

2. What was the verdict of the biblical writers upon the reign of Jotham?

3. Are there any indications of Isaiah's influence in the reign of Jotham?

4. How did Ahaz differ from his father?

5. Is it probable that his conduct was influenced by the heathen party at the court?

6. What features of the heathen religion did Ahaz restore?

7. What is the general outline of the sermon on the "Exalted Mountain"?

8. What contrasts did it point out between the ideal and the reality in Judah?

9. What elements of foreign influence does it specify?

10. On what is destruction soon to fall?

11. What power did Isaiah have in mind as the instrument of these troubles?

12. In what regard did Isaiah continue and emphasize the work of former prophets?

13. What specific sins of the nation are mentioned and denounced in the sermon on "The Vineyard"?

14. What political crisis occurred in 734 B. C.

15. What was Isaiah's view regarding a safe policy at this time?

16. What was the conduct of Ahaz?

17. How did Isaiah try to change the king's purpose?

18. What prediction did Isaiah make?

19. What was the value of Isaiah's reference to the birth of the child?

20. Does this refer to the birth of Jesus?
21. What features of Isaiah's work most impress you in connection with this period?

XXI.

Read carefully the text on which the chapter is based, and the references in the body of the chapter. Read the literature, and consult the map. On the basis of this material prepare the answers to the questions.

1. What are the difficulties regarding the reign of Hezekiah?
2. What was the striking contrast between the character of Ahaz and that of Hezekiah?
3. What reforms did Hezekiah institute in Judah?
4. What generous attitude did Hezekiah assume toward the people of Northern Israel?
5. What elaborate arrangements did Hezekiah make for the celebration of a great Passover?
6. What were the relations of Judah and Assyria at this time?
7. What led to Hezekiah's revolt against the power of Assyria?
8. Would you regard this action of his as unwise? If so, why?
9. Who was king of Assyria at this time?
10. What steps did he immediately take to punish Hezekiah?
11. What was Isaiah's counsel during this period?
12. What were the platforms of the two parties in Jerusalem? To which did Isaiah belong?

13. What statements did Sennacherib make in his own records regarding the campaign of 701 B. C?

14. How do these compare with the biblical narratives in 2 Kings 18-20 and in the Book of Isaiah?

15. What was the occasion of Isaiah's sermon recorded in Chapter 1?

16. What are its leading features?

17. What is its teaching regarding religious ceremonies?

18. How do you account for Isaiah's confidence that Jerusalem would not be destroyed?

19. What demands were made by Sennacherib after he had agreed to spare the city?

20. What singular vindication of Isaiah's confidence occurred?

XXII.

Read carefully the Book of Micah, look up the references in Chapter XXII, locate on the map the places mentioned, and then prepare the answers to these questions.

1. Why is it that so little is known of most of the Old Testament prophets?

2. Is there any reference to Micah outside the book that bears his name?

3. What would seem to have been the esteem in which he was held?

4. Was Micah a city man or a farmer?

5. How does he contrast in this regard with Isaiah?

6. Where did he live?

7. What was the character of the region in which his home lay?

8. In what problems of the time was Micah chiefly interested?

9. What was the character of the social problem in the country districts in Micah's time?

10. What sins did he denounce in the conduct of his countrymen?

11. What threatening events did Micah discover upon the political horizon?

12. In what regard did he hold the popular preachers or prophets of his time?

14. What sins did he charge against them and other leaders?

14. Did the people prefer the preaching of a man like Micah, or that of the ordinary type?

15. What events did Micah foresee beyond the scope of Isaiah's messages?

16. What sequel did he believe the future Babylonian captivity would have?

17. What difference is noticed in the tone of the last two chapters of the book?

18. What is the greatest utterance in the Book of Micah, and what contribution does it make to the spirit of religion?

19. What evils of the present age were dealt with by Micah?

20. What would you regard as Micah's message to our own times?

XXIII.

Be careful to look out the references in the section and read the literature as far as possible, before preparing the answers to these questions.

1. In what important regard did Israel differ from other nations in antiquity?

2. In what interesting figure of speech did the view of a national decline take form?

3. What was the general meaning of the word "messiah" in the Old Testament, and to what persons was it applied?

4. Were the messianic hopes of the Old Testament personal or national in character?

5. What are some of the important prophetic passages in the Book of Genesis?

6. Describe the form and meaning of the so-called "Protevangelium."

7. In what oracle was the choice of the Semitic race as the messenger of God embodied?

8. What were the hopes and promises cherished by the Hebrews in reference to Abraham their great ancestor?

9. Was the popular belief in the character of the age of Moses dependent upon an exact knowledge of the literary materials produced in that period?

10. What was the purpose of the oracle recorded regarding the prophet Balaam?

11. In what words was the priestly character of Israel recorded?

12. What promise was given by Moses regarding the rise of prophets, and why does it seem to refer to a line of prophets rather than a single prophet?

13. In what person and dynasty did the royal hopes of Israel center?

14. Does the song of Hannah represent a personal or national thanksgiving?

15. What warning did the sons of Eli receive regarding the future of the priestly clan?

16. What psalms describe most forcefully the character and honor of the king?

17. Is it known, or necessary to know, to what particular king of Judah these different psalms refer?

18. What is the situation described in the Second Psalm?

19. What counsel is given by the psalmist to the warring and rebellious nations?

20. In what sense is it possible to refer such a national utterance as this to the life and work of Jesus?

21. In what sense is it possible for other nations to cherish national ideals and hopes regarding their part in the world's future?

XXIV.

Give careful attention to the statements of the text, and look up the references cited. Read as fully as possible the literature suggested in Appendix C.

1. What two classes of prophets preached in the early period of Hebrew history? Name those in each group.

2. Did those prophets who did not write books preach anything in the nature of a messianic hope?

3. In which of the two countries did Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah live respectively?

4. Did Hosea have any national expectations that were connected with the rise of a particular messianic person?

5. In what did the national hopes of this prophet consist?

6. What quality of God's nature did Hosea strongly emphasize?

7. Were Hosea's hopes for Israel realized?
8. If not, what bearing has this fact on the correctness of the prophetic forecasts?
9. What events formed the background of Isaiah's preaching?
10. To what extent were Isaiah's messianic hopes colored by the political situation of his time?
11. Is the Immanuel child prophecy of Chapter seven to be regarded as messianic?
12. What facts gave significance to Isaiah's prediction of a coming king in Chapter nine?
13. In what sense can these words be regarded as truly messianic?
14. What did Isaiah affirm regarding the world peace that was to arrive?
15. To what extent are the prophet's hopes for a coming age of peace practicable as a program for Christian effort?
16. In what regard did Micah have clearer view of the future than Isaiah?
17. What is the significance of his Bethlehem prophecy in Chapter five?
18. Does it relate specifically to the birth of Jesus?
19. How was it regarded by the elders and scribes of Jesus' day, and by the early Christian church?
20. Was there a distinct person in the minds of any of those early prophets of Israel as the embodiment of the messianic hopes?
21. In what would you say the messianic hope of early Israel really consists?
22. What do you understand to be the modern Jewish view of the messianic hope?

XXV.

1. What kind of a man and king was Manasseh as contrasted with his father Hezekiah?

2. How do you account for Manasseh's radical departure from the ideals of his father?

3. What measures did Manasseh take to suppress the religion of Jehovah?

4. Do you recall any other rulers in history who persecuted their subjects on account of religion?

5. Do you think the policy of Manasseh was popular or not?

6. Did the prophets and priests of Jehovah keep up their activity during the reign of Manasseh?

7. Is it probable that many of them suffered as martyrs for the religion they loved?

8. What elements in the popular worship did they regard as most dangerous?

9. What methods did the moral leaders of Israel adopt to suppress the worship at the "high places"?

10. What body of laws did they compile?

11. Why did they use the name of Moses so constantly in their work?

12. Is it probable that this collection of laws actually contained many Mosaic elements?

13. What can be said of Deuteronomy as to its (a) literary form, (b) moral tone, (c) religious value?

14. What book of the Old Testament did Jesus quote most frequently? Recall some of his quotations from Deuteronomy.

15. Why did not the authors of Deuteronomy publish it as soon as it was finished?

16. What is the "Shema," or confession of faith?

17. Explain the law of the central sanctuary, and the reason for its important place in the code.

18. What are some of the other principles of this body of laws?

19. What did the prophets and priests do with the law when they had finished its preparation?

20. Do you think they took the best method they could in attempting to provide for the nation's future?

21. What are some of the utterances of Deuteronomy which you regard as most valuable for present-day use?

22. How are you impressed with Deuteronomy, aside from the code section (Chapters 12-26) as a work of literary art and a model of public speech?

XXVI.

Read carefully the Book of Nahum, and look up the places mentioned in it on the map. Consult the literature cited in Appendix C.

1. With what nations did Israel come into contact during the period we have been studying?

2. What were the territory and capital of Assyria?

3. What instances does the Old Testament record of Assyrian operations in Palestine?

4. What was the character of the Assyrians in their military conduct and their treatment of their enemies?

5. What was the feeling among the people of Israel and Judah toward Assyria?

6. What book of prophecy besides Nahum refers to the hatred in which Nineveh was held by the people of Palestine?

7. What is known of Nahum, the writer of this book?

8. What relation does Chapter one sustain to the remainder of the book?

9. What is supposed to be its date as compared with the other two chapters?
10. What is its theme?
11. What situation is pictured in Chapter two?
12. In what terms is the overthrow of Nineveh recorded?
13. What kind of animals are referred to as like the people of Nineveh?
14. Was it assumed by the writer that a fate like that of Nineveh would befall any city that disregarded the divine will?
15. Who brought this ruin upon the city of Nineveh?
16. Of what sins had Nineveh been particularly guilty?
17. How did the prophet undertake to convince those who were doubtful that so strong a city would fall?
18. What event in Egyptian history had transpired a short time before?
19. Does Nahum seem to have been concerned with the moral education of Judah?
20. How was the prophecy of Nahum strikingly fulfilled?
21. What do you think of the ethics of such national hatred as is expressed by Nahum?

APPENDIX

B

These topics are suggested as themes for further study on the part of individuals or classes. They are merely suggestive. Others will readily occur to teachers. The numbers above these divisions correspond to the numbers of the chapters in the previous pages.

TOPICS FOR SPECIAL STUDY, REPORTS OR PAPERS.

I.

1. The origin of the Hebrews, and their relation to other Semitic nations.
2. The three teaching orders in Israel.
3. The schools of the prophets.
4. The place and importance of prophetic writings in the Old Testament.
5. The two classes of prophetic writings in the Old Testament.
6. A comparison of the prophets of Israel with the order of preachers in the Christian Church.

II.

1. The prophets of other nations: comparison with the Hebrew prophets: likenesses and contrasts.
2. The character of Balaam: a comparison of Balaam and Mohammed.
3. The place of prediction in the work of the prophets.

4. The methods of instruction employed by the prophets.
6. The relation of the work of the prophets to the history of their times.

III.

1. Religious customs of Israel and its Semitic kindred.
2. The value of the patriarchal narratives.
3. The sources for the life of Moses.
4. Egypt in the period of the Exodus.
5. Extra-biblical Jewish traditions regarding Moses.
6. The value of the scene of the burning bush in the experience of Moses.
7. The character of Moses.

IV.

1. The biblical sources for the life of Moses.
2. The value of Moses' life in Midian as a preparation for his future work.
3. The plagues of Egypt, their character and effects.
4. The passage of the Red Sea; location and nature of the event.
5. The route of the exodus, and the location of Mt. Sinai.
6. Moses' relation to the growth of law in Israel.
7. The religion of Moses.

V.

1. The fitness of Canaan to be the scene of Israel's history.
2. A comparison of the two narratives of Israel's occupation of Canaan.

3. The significance of the period of the judges in the development of Israel's character.

4. The literary character of the First Book of Samuel.

5. The nature of public worship in the days of Samuel.

6. The nature of Samuel's "call" in the light of present studies in child religion.

7. Social ideals in the age of Samuel.

VI.

1. Foreign influences that were formative in the history of Israel.

2. The nature of Samuel's popular assemblies.

3. The two accounts of Saul's choice as king. Their relative value, and their common points of emphasis.

4. The character of Saul. His strength and his weakness.

5. Samuel's contribution to the religion of Israel.

6. Samuel and the "sons of the prophets."

7. The character of Samuel.

VII.

1. The literary sources for the life of David.

2. David's outlaw life.

3. The rise of the monarchy in Israel.

4. The advantages of Jerusalem as a capitol.

5. The contribution of Nathan to the ideals of prophecy.

6. The prophetic element in the character of David.

7. Social ideals in the age of David.

VIII.

1. Solomon's treatment of Adonijah, Joab, Shemei and Abiathar.
2. The relations of Israel and Egypt in Solomon's period.
3. Solomon as a builder.
4. The character of Solomon.
5. The influence of the temple on the life of the nation.
6. The good and the evil results of the division of the nation.
7. Social ideals among the Hebrews of this period.

IX.

1. The characteristics of biblical chronology.
2. The nature and dangers of the worship of the baalim.
3. The contrasted prophetic and royal policies of government.
4. The miracle stories regarding Elijah.
5. The historicity of the Carmel narrative.
6. The real value of Elijah's work in connection with the religion of Jehovah.

X.

1. The relations between Syria and Israel in the ninth century B. C.
2. The personal characteristics of Ahab of Samaria.
3. The rights of the people in ancient Israel.
4. The dynasty of Ahab.
5. Jehovah and other gods, as illustrated in the embassy to Baalzebub.

6. The place of Elijah in the political and religious development of Israel.

7. Social ideals of the age of Elijah.

XI.

1. The political background of Elisha's ministry.

2. The miracle stories relating to Elisha.

3. The story of the Moabite stone.

4. The picture of Hebrew life presented by the narrative of the woman of Shunem.

5. The relation of Israel and Syria in this period.

6. The character of Gehazi.

XII.

1. The relations of Israel, Syria and Assyria in this period.

2. The Assyrian record of Jehu's payment of tribute. The purpose and the results of this tribute.

3. The historicity of the narratives respecting Elisha.

4. The responsibility of the prophets for the rise of Jehu to power, and for his methods of dealing with the baal worship.

5. The character of Jehu as captain and king.

6. The permanent values of Elisha's character and service for Israel.

7. The social ideals of Elisha's age.

XIII.

1. The schools of the prophets.
2. The prophetic sources of the early records of the Old Testament.
3. The problem of literary analysis in the historical records.
4. Tatian's "Diatessaron," and its bearing on the Hexateuchal problem.
5. Israel's earliest view of God.
6. Proper names and their significance in the documents.
7. Social ideals of the Judean narrative.

XIV.

1. Prophetic centers in the Northern Kingdom.
2. The literary features of the Ephraimite narrative.
3. The ethical and religious features of the Ephraimite source.
4. Some significant narratives preserved in the E document.
5. The relation of the Genesis story of Joseph to the Egyptian story of "The Two Brothers."
6. The value of the Joseph narratives as material for religious instruction.
7. The social ideals of E.

XV.

1. The influence of Assyria upon the career of Israel.
2. The transition from agricultural to urban life in Israel, and its results.
3. A character sketch of the prophet Amos.
4. The literary character of the Book of Amos.

5. The methods of the prophets in preaching, as illustrated in the work of Amos.

6. The relation of the prophetic writings to those of the Wisdom school, as illustrated in the Book of Amos.

XVI.

1. The doctrine of the "Day of the Lord" in the Book of Amos.

2. The sins which Amos most emphatically condemned.

3. The contrast between the prophetic and priestly ideals in the days of Amos.

4. The contrast between the professional prophets and the ideals of Amos.

5. Amos' doctrine of national values.

6. The element of prediction in the Book of Amos.

7. The social ideals of the prophet Amos.

XVII.

1. The effect of the popular religion of Israel upon the morals of the nation.

2. A character study of the man Hosea.

3. The references to Judah in the Book of Hosea.

4. The psychological significance of Hosea's explanation of his experience.

5. The value of suffering as a preparation for religious service.

6. Other suffering prophets and reformers in religious history.

XVIII.

1. The last days of the kingdom of Israel.
2. The chief sanctuaries of Israel and their effect upon the public life.
3. The contrast between Amos' attitude toward the religious use of images and that of Hosea.
4. The permanent results of Hosea's work.
5. The relation of Hosea to the popular prophets of his day.
6. The literary features of the Book of Hosea.

XIX.

1. The course and culmination of prophecy in Northern Israel.
2. Leading features of the reign of Uzziah.
3. The Bible view of leprosy.
4. Relation of Isaiah to the life of his age.
5. Literary features of the Book of Isaiah.
6. Relation of the call of Isaiah to his ministry and message.
7. The call of Isaiah and the call of the modern minister.

XX.

1. The reign and character of Ahaz.
2. The alliance of 734 B. C.
3. The contrasted policies of the prophets and the kings.
4. Isaiah as a preacher.
5. Isaiah as a statesman.
6. The "child prophecies" of Isaiah.
7. Prediction in the ministry of Isaiah.

XXI.

1. The chronology of Hezekiah's reign.
2. The reforms of Hezekiah, and their basis.
3. The relations of Judah and Northern Israel after the fall of Samaria.
4. Isaiah as an orator.
5. The political teachings of Isaiah.
6. The effects of the Assyrian invasion on Judah.
7. Social ideals of Isaiah.

XXII.

1. The likeness and contrasts of Micah and Isaiah.
2. The country problems of Micah's age.
3. Parallels to Judah's condition in the history of England and continental lands.
4. The use of prediction by Micah.
5. The messianic hope in the Book of Micah.
6. The literary features of Micah.
7. Social ideals of Micah.

XXIII.

1. Meaning of the term "messiah" and its significance in general Hebrew literature.
2. Israel's messianic hope as contrasted with the expectations of other ancient nations.
3. The basis and validity of the Hebrew belief in the unique and divine choice and function of the nation.
4. The presence of national hopes of a messianic character in the period preceding the rise of the monarchy.
5. The monarchy as the center and mold of messianic expectations during the royal period.

6. In what respect were the royal psalms the expression of actual qualities in the monarchs, and to what extent were they ideal?

7. Social aspects of the messianic hope.

XXIV.

1. The content of the messianic hope in early Israel.

2. The teachings of Amos, and the lack of the messianic element.

3. Hosea's expectations for the future of Israel.

4. The child prophecies in Isaiah.

5. The messianic hope and universal peace.

6. Was the messianic hope of the early prophets personal?

7. Modern phases of the messianic hope.

XXV.

1. The political reasons for Manasseh's heathen policy.

2. The quiet work of priests and prophets during Manasseh's reign.

3. Foreign relations during the reign of Manasseh.

4. The leading features of the Book of Deuteronomy.

5. The value and difficulties of the law of centralization.

6. The problems relating to the authorship and date of Deuteronomy.

XXVI.

1. The evidence regarding the writer and the date of the prophecy of Nahum.
2. The closing days of the Assyrian empire.
3. The siege and fall of Nineveh.
4. The correctness of the picture of Nineveh presented by the prophet Nahum.
5. The influence of Nineveh's fall upon subject nations.
6. The religious value of the prophecy of Nahum.
7. Historical references in the Book of Jonah.

APPENDIX

C

LITERATURE

The literature named in the following pages is, of course, but a small part of the voluminous material available for the study of the subject. The numbers refer to the chapters in the body of this book.

I.

There are many valuable books on the subject of this chapter. Among them are Kent, "The Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament;" W. R. Smith, "The Prophets of Israel;" Kirkpatrick, "The Doctrine of the Prophets," Lecture 1; Cornill, "The Prophets of Israel," Chapt. I; Ottley, "The Religion of Israel," Chapt. I; Sanders and Kent, "Messages of the Earlier Prophets," Introduction; Willett, "The Prophets of Israel," Chapt. I. Consult the articles on "Prophets" and "Prophecy" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

II.

On the general nature of prophecy and the work of the prophets consult the introductions and early chapters of such works as W. R. Smith, "Prophets of Israel;" Kirkpatrick, "Doctrine of the Prophets;" Cornill, "The Prophets of Israel;" Ottley, "The Hebrew Prophet;" J. M. P. Smith, "The Prophet and his Problems." Also the articles on "Prophets" and "Prophecy" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

III.

Wade, "Old Testament History," Chaps. I-III; Addis, "Hebrew Religion," Chaps. I-III; Ottley, "Short History of the Hebrews," and "The Religion of Israel;" Paton, "The Early Religion of Israel," Chaps. I-III; Driver, "The Book of Genesis," Introduction and Part I; Kent, "Beginnings of Hebrew History," Introduction and Appendices; Hodges, "Classbook of O. T. History," Chaps. I-VI; W. R. Smith, "The Religion of the Semites." Articles on "Religion of Israel" and "Moses" in encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

IV.

Wade, "Old Testament History," Chaps. IV, V; H. P. Smith, "Old Testament History;" Budde, "Religion of Israel to the Exile," Lecture I; Kent, "History of the Hebrew People," Vol. 1, Part I; Ottley, "Short History of the Hebrews," and "The Religion of Israel;" Cornill, "Prophets of Israel," Chapt. II; Mitchell, "Ethics of the Old Testament," Chaps. I-IV; Paton, "The Early Religion of Israel," Chapt. III; Hodges, "Classbook of O. T. History," Chapt. VII. Articles on "Moses" and "Law" in encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

V.

Paton, "The Early Religion of Israel," Chaps. IV, V, and "Early History of Syria and Palestine," Chapt. IX; Smith, "Historical Geography of the Holy Land;" Wade, "Old Testament History," Chapt. VI-VIII; Cornill, "History of the People of Israel;" Addis, "Hebrew Religion," Chapt. IV; Kent, "History of The Hebrew People," Vol. 1, Part II; Ottley, "The Religion of Israel;" Hodges, "Classbook of O. T. History," Chaps. VIII-XI; Willett, "Studies in the First Book of Samuel." Articles on "Canaan," "Judges," "Shiloh," and "Samuel" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

VI.

Deane, "Samuel and Saul, Their Lives and Times;" Wade, "Old Testament History," Chapt. VII, VIII; Kent, "History of the Hebrew People," Vol. I, Part III; Ottley, "Short History of the Hebrews;" Hodges, "Classbook of O. T. History," Chapt. XI; Mitchell, "Ethics of the Old Testament," Chapt. V; Cornill, "Prophets of Israel," Chapt. III; Willett, "Studies in the First Book of Samuel." Articles on "Philistines," "Saul," and "Samuel" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

VII.

H. P. Smith, "Old Testament History," Chapt. V; Wade, "Old Testament History," Chapt. IX, X; Cornill, "History of the People of Israel;" Paton, "Early Religion of Israel," Chapt. V; Kent, "History of the Hebrew People," Vol. I, Part III; Deane, "David, His Life and Times;" Willett, "Prophets of Israel," Chapt. V. Articles on "David" and "Nathan" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

VIII.

H. P. Smith, "Old Testament History," Chapt. VI; Wade, "Old Testament History," Chapt. XI; Farrar, "Solomon, His Life and Times;" Kent, "History of the Hebrew People," Vol. I, Part III; Hodges, "Classbook of O. T. History," Chapt. XVII, and XIX; Mitchell, "Ethics of the Old Testament," Chapt. VI. Articles on "Solomon," "Jeroboam" and "Ahijah" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

IX.

Hodges, "Classbook of O. T. History," Chapt. XV-XVII; Kent, "History of the Hebrew People," Vol. II, Part I; Kittel, "History of the Hebrews," Vol. II, pp. 207-210; Wade, "Old Testament History," Chapt. XI, XII; Cornill, "History of the People of Israel;" Mitchell, "Ethics of the Old Testament," Chapt. VII. Articles on "Elijah," "Ahab," and "Baal" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

X.

W. R. Smith, "The Prophets of Israel," 85-87; Milligan, "Elijah, His Life and Times;" Kent, "History of the Hebrew People," Vol. II, Chapt. VI; Wade, "Old Testament History," Chapt. XII; Kittel, "History of the Hebrews," Book III, Chapt. II; Ottley, "Short History of the Hebrews," Chapt. VIII. Articles on "Elijah" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

XI.

McCurdy, "History, Prophecy and the Monuments," Vol. I, Book VI; Wade, "Old Testament History," Chapt. XII; Kent, "History of the Hebrew People," Vol. II, Part II, Chapt. I, II; Cornill, "History of the People of Israel," Chapt. IV; H. P. Smith, "Old Testament History;" Kittel, "History of the Hebrews," Vol. II, Book III, Chapt. III; Kent, "Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives," Appendix IV; Price, "The Monuments and the Old Testament," Chapt. XII. Articles in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries on "Elisha," and the other topics involved in this study.

XII.

W. R. Smith, "Prophets of Israel," 85-87; Wade, "Old Testament History," Chapt. XII; Kent, "History of the Hebrew People," Vol. II, Part II, Chapt. II; H. P. Smith, "Old Testament History," Chapt. VI; Ottley, "Short History of the Hebrews," Chapt. VIII; Cornill, "History of the People of Israel," 108-112. Articles in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries on "Elisha," "Jehu," "Baal."

XIII.

Kent, "Beginnings of Hebrew History," Introduction IV; Driver, "Genesis," Introduction, and "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament" (Genesis); McFadyen, "Introduction to the Old Testament" (Genesis); Ryle, "Documents of the Hexateuch;" Mitchell, "Genesis," Introduction. Articles in encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries on "Hexateuch," "Genesis," etc.

XIV.

Kent, "Beginnings of Hebrew History," pp. 37-41; Driver, "Genesis," pp. I-VXI; Skinner, "Genesis," pp. XLVII-LVI; Sanders and Fowler, "Outlines of Biblical History and Literature," pp. 30-100; Mitchell, "Ethics of the Old Testament," Chapt. IX. Discussion of the literature in such histories as Wade, H. P. Smith, etc. Articles in encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries on "Hexateuch," "Genesis," etc.

XV.

Addis, "Hebrew Religion," 135-163; Cornill, "The Prophets of Israel," pp. 37-46; Kirkpatrick, "The Doctrine of the Prophets," pp. 83-108; George Adam Smith, "Book of the Twelve Prophets," I. 61-196; Harper, "Amos and Hosea," (International Critical Commentary, C-CXI); J. M. P. Smith, "Amos, Hosea, and Micah," (Bible for Home and School) 1-13; Willett, "The Prophets of Israel," Chapt. V. Articles on "Amos" in the introductions, encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

XVI.

Addis, "Hebrew Religion," 135-163; Cornill, "The Prophets of Israel," pp. 37-46; Kirkpatrick, "The Doctrine of the Prophets," pp. 83-108; George Adam Smith, "Book of the Twelve Prophets," I. 61-196; Harper, "Amos and Hosea," C-CXI; J. M. P. Smith, "Amos, Hosea, and Micah," 1-12; Willett, "The Prophets of Israel," Chapt. V. Articles on "Amos" in encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

XVII.

Addis, "Hebrew Religion," 163-169; Cornill, "The Prophets of Israel," pp. 47-55; Kirkpatrick, "The Doctrine of the Prophets," pp. 109-142; George Adam Smith, "Book of the Twelve Prophets," I, pp. 211-354; W. R. Harper, "Amos and Hosea," CXL-CLVII; J. M. P. Smith, "The Prophet and his Problems," Chapt. V, and "Amos, Hosea and Micah;" Chamberlin, "The Hebrew Prophets," Chapt. VIII; Willett, "The Prophets of Israel," Chapt. VI. Articles on "Hosea" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

XVIII.

Addis, "Hebrew Religion," 135-169; Cornill, "The Prophets of Israel," pp. 47-55; Kirkpatrick, "The Doctrine of the Prophets," pp. 109-142; George Adam Smith, "Book of the Twelve Prophets," I, pp. 211-354; W. R. Harper, "Amos and Hosea;" J. M. P. Smith, "Amos, Hosea, and Micah;" Willett, "The Prophets of Israel," Chapt. VI. Articles on "Hosea" in the introductions, encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

XIX.

Cornill, "The Prophets of Israel," 56-70; Kirkpatrick, "The Doctrine of the Prophets," 135-179; George Adam Smith, "The Book of Isaiah," (Expositor's Bible), Vol. I; McFadyen, "Isaiah," (Bible for Home and School); Budde, "The Religion of Israel to the Exile," Lect. V; S. R. Driver, "Isaiah, His Life and Times;" Chamberlin, "The Hebrew Prophets," Chapt. IX; Willett, "Prophets of Israel," Chapt. VII. Articles on "Isaiah" in introductions, encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

XX.

S. R. Driver, "Isaiah, His Life and Times;" Cornill, "Prophets of Israel," 56-70; Kirkpatrick, "The Doctrine of the Prophets," Lect. VI; G. A. Smith, "Isaiah," Vol. I; McFadyen, "Isaiah;" Wade, "Old Testament History," 355-373; 403-436; H. P. Smith, "Old Testament History," Chapt. VII; Willett, "The Prophets of Israel," Chapt. VII. Articles on "Isaiah" and "Ahaz" in encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

XXI.

S. R. Driver, "Isaiah, His Life and Times;" Cornill, "Prophets of Israel," 56-70; Kirkpatrick, "The Doctrine of the Prophets," Lect. VI; G. A. Smith, "Isaiah;" McFadyen, "Isaiah;" Price, "The Monuments and the Old Testament," Chapt. XVI; Kent, "Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives," Appendix, IX; Willett, "The Prophets of Israel," Chapt. VII. Articles on "Isaiah," "Hezekiah" and "Sennacherib" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

XXII.

Wade, "Old Testament History," 403-437; Smith, "Old Testament History," Chapt. VII; Addis, "Hebrew Religion," Chapt. V; Kirkpatrick, "The Doctrine of the Prophets," Lect. VII; Cornill, "The Prophets of Israel," 69, 70; J. M. P. Smith, "Micah," (International Critical Commentary, and Bible for Home and School); Willett, "Prophets of Israel," Chapt. VIII. Articles on "Micah" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

XXIII.

Goodspeed, "Israel's Messianic Hope," pp. 21-75; Briggs, "Messianic Prophecy," pp. 1-50; Davidson, "The Theology of the Old Testament," 356-384; W. R. Smith, "Prophets of Israel," Lecture 1; G. A. Smith, "Book of the Twelve Prophets," Vol. I, pp. 1-29. Articles on "Messiah," and "Messianic Prophecy" in the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

XXIV.

Goodspeed, "Israel's Messianic Hope," pp. 21-75; Briggs, "Messianic Prophecy," pp. 1-152; Davidson, "The Theology of the Old Testament," 356-384; Orelli, "Old Testament Prophecy," pp. 1-50; W. R. Smith, "Prophets of Israel," Lecture 1; G. A. Smith, "Book of the Twelve Prophets," Vol. I, pp. 1-29. Articles in encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries on "Messiah," and "Messianic Prophecy."

XXV.

Cheyne, "Jeremiah, His Life and Times;" Driver, "Deuteronomy" (International Critical Commentary) Introduction; Kent, "The Messages of Israel's Lawgivers," Introduction, IV; Sections on the reigns of Manasseh and Josiah in the Old Testament Histories of Wade, Smith, Kent, Kittel and Ottley. Sections on "Deuteronomy" in Old Testament Introductions by Driver, McFadyen, Bennett and Adeney, and the encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

XXVI.

A. B. Davidson, "Nahum" (Cambridge Bible); G. A. Smith, "The Twelve Prophets," Vol. II; Farrar, "The Minor Prophets;" J. M. P. Smith, "Nahum" (International Critical Commentary); Kirkpatrick, "The Doctrine of the Prophets," Lect. VIII. Articles on "Nahum" in the introductions, encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

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